

SARANAC

A STORY OF
LAKE CHAMPLAIN

by
JOHN TALBOT SMITH

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AUTHOR OF

"BROTHER AZARIAS," "SOLITARY ISLAND,"
"HIS HONOR THE MAYOR," "A WOMAN
OF CULTURE," ETC.

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SARANAC.

CHAPTER I.

THE PILOT'S SON.

In Saranac the world was celebrating New Year's Day, or as the villagers themselves would call it *le Jour de l'an*, *The day of all the year*; and because of a certain custom connected with this celebration a difficulty had sprung up in the household of Mrs. Sullivan, at five o'clock of the morning, which brought trouble to the hearts of her two grandchildren. Saranac was a border town, with a mixed population, American by instinct and training, French-Canadian, Irish, English, and a mixture of all three at times in the matters of blood and sentiment. Hence there were all sorts of customs and traditions and sentiments in Saranac, and all sorts of difficulties springing from them; and one of these had intruded on Mrs. Sullivan on the unluckiest day of all the year for such a thing to happen. Because this good woman held it as an axiom almost, that the troubles of New Year's Day are sure to repeat themselves daily the entire year. She was therefore careful to make the festival one of unbounded joy, to banish all words, thoughts, and deeds smacking of sorrow. It was a heroic effort for a reminiscient mind, but success had so often rewarded the effort as to make it easy in the end.

Mrs. Sullivan's eldest daughter one day married a

young neighbor with French blood and a French name. This event had occurred eleven years before the story opens, the young man was now dead a year, and the daughter had returned with her two children to her mother's house. Mrs. Sullivan was annoyed at one feature of these incidents. It was not only her daughter who came home, but also her daughter's French children, with pretty French names and fashions, the Sullivan blood prominent but ornamented so daintily as to stir her wrath daily against "Frinch notions." The children and their mother spoke excellent French, and it seemed to the grandmother that the Sullivan had been extinguished in the Lajeunesse.

"Aftther fightin' the Frinch for thirty years," she exclaimed to a friend, "here I have a houseful o' thim. Wirra, to think I'd ever see the day whin wan o' me name 'ud be a grandmother to Frinchmen!"

The position however was not hopeless, and grandma's severity was never called out except to repress or condemn "Frinch notions" in her children. Her harshness on this point gave Remi and Elise a dread of offending her. And when New Year's morning came and it was necessary to ask grandma's blessing according to Canadian custom the first serious difficulty of life in grandma's home presented itself. They had always received papa's blessing on that happy day, and papa before he died had commanded them to ask it thenceforth from Grandma Sullivan. It was five o'clock in the morning, and down in the kitchen they could hear her clattering the dishes briskly while they stood in their white night-dresses at the head of the stairs talking.

"You go first and ask her," said Remi in French, "and you can have my sled all day."

"You're a boy, you ought to go first," said Elise, not caring much to bargain.

"Let us not go at all," he ventured.

"But papa, you forget, Remi," said Elise tearfully.

"I don't forget, but what's the use of asking when there'll be a big fuss made and no good come of it."

"Well, you take my hand and let us go down even," said Elise, "and I'll ask her."

"All right. But mind—I run the minute she says 'that's another Frinch notion.'"

They giggled a little over grandma's brogue, and then stole softly down the stairs. Only a vivid remembrance of papa's command prevented a stampede from the door. There was a long and dreadful pause outside the kitchen.

"I'm going back to bed," said Remi, but Elise threw open the door and both little figures bowed very sweetly to grandma as they wished her a happy New Year and kissed her and showed their gifts from mamma and Uncle Hugh. Then grandma being in a good humor the little diplomats knelt down at her knees and Elise said with her heart in her mouth:

"Please, grandma, give us your benediction."

"Me what," said the astonished lady.

"Your blessing, grandma," said Remi.

"Another Frinch notion," snapped Mrs. Sullivan. "Yez have me tired wid 'em. Shure, haven't ye me blessin' mornin', noon, and night the year round, and why do ye be wantin' it New Year's Day above anny other time?"

"Papa told us to come to you," said Elise, holding Remi so tightly that he could not move.

"Well, he had some sinse if he *was* Frinch," said the old lady, "the Lord rest his sowl this day! It's not refusin' his orphans annythin' I'd be, an' the whole house is yours while ye're in it. But I'll have no Frinch notions here—"

"Please, grandma," sniffled Elise.

"An' to day the first of the year to begin id in Frinch style—I wouldn't do it for an angel, glory be to God, let alone a Lajeunesse "

"To-morrow's just as good," said Remi.

"But papa said to-day," and Elise puckered up her features for a good cry when grandma picked her up and kissed the wrinkles away, saying :

"Don't cry on New Year's day, acushla, ye can take me binediction, or whatever ye call it—it's not much good anyhow—an' don't have a wet eye or a cross word for any living sowl to-day."

And grandma went on then to scold them for not being more like the Sullivans, and to praise them for remembering their father's wishes, and to describe the way her county in Ireland celebrated New Year's day without anything French or Protestant about it, only the pure, sweet Irish and Catholic way, which was better than any other in the whole world, until Elise nearly cried again with grief that her name was not Sullivan and she had not been born in Ireland. But the blessing of grandma was enough to make the day bright for the children, and they forgot their own names in the joy and fun of the festival.

"As the day began, so it will end," said Mrs. Sullivan to her daughter, in describing how her blessing

had been given. "It's a Frinch day for this house — God help us. I never see the like of it afore — it'll be Frinch here, an' Frinch there — where'll ye put 'em all, Julia, I'd like to know, and yer relatives comin' to see ye, Tony Christmas, and Bony Batcheese, an' all the other beautiful names that belongs to 'em."

"See here, mother," said Hugh, "you want to be careful how you step out to-day. This is the day for making up among old enemies, and as sure as Mrs. Bobeau meets you she'll speak to you, and perhaps kiss you right in the street."

Mrs. Sullivan's indignation at the mere mention of such a scene was too great for words, and lest it might really come to pass she hurried away to Mass as the first bell was ringing, and so escaped a reconciliation. The snow was heavy on the ground. The sun did not honor the day with his appearance. The great Lake Champlain, on which Saranac stands, stretched away for miles in its covering of snow and ice, with black shores and grim mountains around. A man stood in the street reading a letter as Mrs. Sullivan passed by.

"'Appy Noo Yir," he said. "I s'pose Cap'n Sullivan will be at church to day?"

"The same to you, Misther Rush; I hope he will," said Mrs. Sullivan. "It's where every Christian ought to be."

"If I don't see 'im this mornin', tell 'im I'll be round to night to 'ave a talk with 'im."

"I will, sor," with chilling dignity, and under her breath, "Of course ye'll be round, ye'll all be round to see the Lajeunesses, but you won't see me, good man, if I can help it."

It was really a French-Canadian day, however, and Mrs. Sullivan found it hard to withstand the hearty and polite manner of the people. The churchgoers were out in force before she got half way up the street. They came in threes and fives and tens, whole family groups of three generations, the young ones laughing over their awkward attempts to get the day's benediction from their parents, the old ones blocking the way with vigorous handshaking of friends. The streets of the town looked festive with the movement of the cheerful procession which Mrs. Sullivan unconsciously headed on the way to the church. A few neighbors tried to overtake her in vain. By this behavior she escaped the dreaded congratulations, and once inside the church she was secure for two hours. Even here the French idea pursued her. The green trimmings on the walls were put on in Canadian style, and the priest preached a French sermon to please the majority of his people, who, nevertheless, understood and spoke English well.

"I'll be talkin' the language meself before I get home," said Mrs. Sullivan at this last pinch to her feelings, and in a kind of despair she went out with the crowd, and was shaken and pushed and laughed at and talked to almost to her own door where Mrs. Bobeau was waiting for her to put the seal on the degradation of the Sullivans by kissing her and asking her to be a friend once more.

"And this is only the beginnin'," she sighed.

The door bell was ringing constantly all the afternoon, and from the parlor came a steady flow of talk and laughing and the clinking of glasses with enough

French conversation to exasperate her. Mrs. Lajeunesse and Captain Hugh Sullivan did the honors, and seemed to like it. They tried to coax her into the room, but her steady reply was, "I'm Irish Let the Frinch celebrate without me." And they did, quite used to the polite indisposition which Mrs. Sullivan suffered from on New Year's Day. But the night being come, the townspeople went each to his own tea-table, and the home was left to its own. The lamps were lighted and the curtains drawn, and Mrs. Sullivan had the floor.

"Now, mother," said the Captain cheerfully, "let us hear how you celebrated in the County Down or Limerick on this glorious day."

"I was born in the County Limerick," said his mother, with dignity, "and rared in the County Down."

"All Ireland," said Remi, "isn't as big as New York State."

"Hush, Remi," said mamma, in a tone of warning.

"The more shame to New York State," said Mrs. Sullivan, "to let a little island bate it all to pieces. The State is good enough. I can't find any fault on'y wid the people in it."

The bell rang. "Ye might be in Ireland twenty New Year's Days," she continued, "an' the bell on the door wouldn't ring as often as this afternoon jist."

"Because why?" said the Captain. "Were there no bells?"

"Bekase why, sor? Bekase the people had too much sense to go round bell-ringing anny day."

"Captain LaRoche to see Uncle Hugh," bawled Remi from the parlor door.

"He towld me he was comin' to see ye," said Mrs. Sullivan, "but I forgot all about it, I declare. Let him walk right in, child. Wan captain more won't spoil the broth."

LaRoche was a swarthy lake sailor of sixty, grizzled and weather-beaten, but good for twenty years more of the peaceful, healthful life which his kind enjoys on Lake Champlain. He bowed with his never-failing French courtesy to each person present, and when the greetings and inquiries were done, handed Hugh a letter.

"See what you can make out of that," he said.

The children took possession of him in a moment, while Hugh was reading, and wormed a short story out of him concerning the great storms on the lake and the great boats that had been wrecked. Then Hugh looked up from his letter.

"I never well understood," he said, "just how your son got into trouble, and so perhaps I don't see what this letter means."

"You were a boy, Cap'n," said LaRoche, "w'en Amedee got hisself into a mess he'll never git out of, I s'pose. Your mother knows about it. He was a smart boy, Amedee, too smart for his own good. He worked for Winthrop & Co., as clerk, and took to drinkin' an' carryin' on. That's wot brought him low, Cap'n. He took to helpin' hisself at last of their money. W'en it was found out he run away an' I hain't seen him sence."

"There was an awful row over it, wasn't there?" said Remi, deeply interested.

"No, 'twas very quite. All I knowed about it was when Howard DeLaunay come tome and told me about it. Amedée was gone then with three thousand dollars spent of their money. Winthrop wanted to follow him, but DeLaunay saie no. All they could do was to jail him. What was the use o' that when the money was gone. The story got out, o' course, and made it pretty hard for me an' the ol' woman. She hain't ever quite got over it. He was all we had to home, an' we couldn't make up our minds to losin' our boy that way. We never calc'lated on it."

"No, God help ye, nor would anny wan," said sympathetic Mrs. Sullivan. "An' have ye never heard of him?"

"That's a letter from him," pointing to the letter which Hugh had just read. "He writes onct in a while. He seems to be a wild sort of boy yit, an' stays mostly in Texas. What do you make of it, Cap'n?"

"I'll think over it," said Hugh carelessly. The old man folded the letter sadly and seemed disappointed. At a sign from Hugh the members of the family, one after another, excused themselves for a moment, and did not return. The two men were alone together, although LaRoche did not yet perceive it. He had great respect for the opinion of young Sullivan, on whose boat he had been for many years a wheelsman.

"Your son seems to think," said Hugh, "that he did not take as much money as they say."

"Do you know what I thought when I read that letter?" and the old man's eyes looked savage an instant.

"Better not say it, LaRoche, until you know more about it"

"Well, look at the words, Cap'n." He unfolded the letter and read slowly as if he were spelling each word:

"I met Jack Wilson out here not long ago, and heard all about you, and the stories they tell of me. Someone is lying, father, when it is said I stole over three thousand dollars. As there is a God above me I never took over two hundred from the safe, and that I no more intended to steal than if I took De-Launay's hat for an hour's walk. Put down those stories, father, every time."

"W'en I read that letter," said the old man, "I'll tell you wot I thought. My boy was al'ays hones' as the day. I never knew 'im to steal. If he hadn't gone so quick, I'd 'a spent my las' cent to save 'im. W'en I read that letter I thought someone did that stealin' an' put it on to my boy. They made 'im believe he took it, or that he took some, an' sent 'im off in a hurry like a real thief, and left us—'is mother an' me—him a poor, brokeup thing in Texas

His confused speech ended in a low, violent sob.

"I'll tell you what you can do," said Hugh. "I guess you had better let me do it. You're not fit just now to do anything with such an idea as that. It's impossible. But I'll look up the circumstances that happened after Amedée ran away. I'll send him a good account of them, and ask him to send us his story. Then you can see how foolish this fancy is. I wish it was different. But it isn't. You'd better believe that."

"I mus' believe it," said LaRoche, "until the other

side has its say. You can look after it, Hugh. You're educated, an' know jest how to go about it. It's fifteen years, you know. The ol' woman is crying at home now, for it's fifteen New Years she hasn't seen him. She has no hopes to see him ever any more."

"Are you going to write to him soon?"

"He won't let us write often. Onct a year, sometimes twice he sends us a new address. He's al'ays movin'. He sent us a new address this time, Osborne, Texas."

"Then leave all to me," said Hugh as he attended the old man to the door and bade him good night. He stood there thinking a few minutes over the passage in the letter. It might mean a good deal, and it probably meant no more than the defiant scrawl of a ruined adventurer, anxious to hold some place still in the esteem of his wretched parents. The common report of Amedée La Roche had made him a fast young man, not bad but foolish, who had spent all the money his hands could touch, and for his father's sake was spared the agony of pursuit and the shame of a prison. Hugh Sullivan had never before heard his father speak of him, and he was astonished to see how firm had been the recent hope that his son might yet prove himself an innocent and wronged man. This could be done only by proving some very respectable people respectable rascals, which in the present case would be the most daring and hopeless task any man could set himself.

"Well, God help him," said Mrs. Sullivan when they were in the sitting-room again, "he has the father's heart and the father's sorra, even if he is a Frinchman."

CHAPTER II.

MR. GRADY ADMIRER THE FRENCH.

The next morning a snow-and-wind storm had taken lodgings in Saranac. There was already a hard-packed covering of snow on the ground. The contributions of January and February were yet to come, and the first came generously. A west wind sent every snow-flake to the ground like a bullet from the gun ; where it attacked a street or a lonely building it sent the frightened snow dashing into the air against itself, and played all the pranks of a mad artist with a picture. In an hour Saranac was partly effaced and altogether defaced. Streets were filled up, houses shrouded from peak to foundation stone with daubs of snow, and sight of the world limited to a twenty-foot circle. The wind roared and shrieked without a second's abatement. A storm in Saranac, for a really harmless and beneficent creature, was as wild as a Texan broncho, and while it held possession of the town ended all occupations except those which must go on in spite of death or weather. It stayed three days and often five, during which time Saranac folk ate apples, drank cider, cracked butternuts, and told stories in an admirable, never-out of fashion way.

Mr. Tim Grady, who was a Saranac philosopher of eminence, and so many things besides that only a long history might detail them, always found a strong reason for visiting Mrs. Sullivan in stormy weather ;

not only because her cider had a Celtic sting and her apples a Limerick flavor, but chiefly because Mrs. Sullivan was a skeptic as to Mr. Grady's learning and had to be convinced by illustration and overthrown by argument oftener than more credulous people. No sooner was the old gentleman prevented by bad weather from his usual tour of the town than he crossed the garden and knocked at Mrs. Sullivan's kitchen door, carrying in his hand the latest news from Limerick, and in his mind a few intellectual fireworks to knock the skepticism of the old lady dumb. Some said this and others said that concerning these visits. There was nothing to be said, however, but what this story shall discover, the return of Mrs. Lajeunesse to her mother's home having blighted every hope that Tim Grady might have entertained towards his countrywoman. He was in the kitchen paring an apple as early as eight o'clock that stormy morning. Hugh was still abed. The children were playing in the parlor and chattering like birds in French, while Mrs. Sullivan listened in pleased wonder to the fluent tongues.

"Isn't it wondherful, Misther Grady," said she, "how they can undherstand wan another, talkin' away wid such gibberish! an' thin in a minute they turn to English and away they go as fast in that as ever I could."

Mr. Grady listened to this simple wonderment with a smile of pity widening his wide mouth, and a critical glance for the pulp of the pared apple in his hand.

"'Tis as you say, Mrs. Soollivan," he replied, "but if ye'll remimber Patrick Sweeny, that was brought

up two miles from your own father's house in Kilbeg—his mother was a Sheehy of Youghal—an' his father sint him for twelve years to Paris to study, why, woman dear, he had seven languages jist as pat to his tongue as butter to buttermilk."

"Wor thim the Sweeny's of the Red barns?" said Mrs. Sullivan.

"The very same, ma'am. I mind me o' hearin' Patrick call home the min to dinner in the seven languages, an' his own aunt tould me he had the hair sthandin' on her head talkin' Haybrew to her the whole time she was there,"

"Was that the widdy Powers beyant the big hill?"

"The same, ma'am." "Faith, thin," said Mrs. Sullivan, "he must have talked her hair aff wid his Haybrew, for her poll was as smooth as a bullyard ball afore I left Limerick."

"An' there was Cardinal Mezzofanti," continued Mr. Grady, not heeding this rebuke to his veracity, "he spoke fifty-eight lauguages before he died."

"Where did he find 'em all to learn, Misther Grady? I thought there was only the Irish, an' Dutch, an' the Frinch besides the English. An' sure they're enough to bother our brains widout puttin' any more onto us. That's what I say."

"Did ye ever hear tell o' the tower o' Babel," said Mr. Grady with that air which warned the old lady that the moment to crush her had arrived.

"I did as well as other people," she answered boldly.

"Well there's where he picked up his fifty-eight, ma'am."

"An' did he have to go as far as that for 'em, poor man?"

Mr. Grady refused to pursue the subject any further, conscious that he had overwhelmed Mrs. Sullivan if she were the sort of a woman to submit when knocked down and out. There was a silence of a few minutes until her greatest grievance jogging her memory she cautiously opened her mind to Mr. Grady.

"Yistherday was a great day for the Frinch," she said.

"It was a great day for us all I hope, Mrs. Sullivan."

"Ay, but isn't it sthrange how they all come out on that day wid colors an' ribbons an' silks an' velvets, an' make nothin' at all o' Christmas day just like haythens."

"I never saw a woman that had so much agin the Frinch as you have," said Mr. Grady with a touch of severity. "Now if you knew, Mrs Sullivan—"

"I don't want to know."

"If you knew, Mrs. Sullivan—"

"Why couldn't they let me alone, and take some-
wan like yourself to play their thricks an—"

"If you knew, Mrs. Sullivan, all we owe to them—"

"All they owe to us, you mane, Misther Grady. Sure they owe everywan, an' it's not us that 'ud owe the likes o' them."

"Now, I'll tell ye ma'am, why I admire the Frinch," said Mr. Grady with savage deliberation. "First of all to begin right here at home, they helped this counthry whin it needed help against England in the great an' glorious sthruggle for independence in '76. An' next," with increased vehemence, "they have been as good Catholics as wan 'ud wish to see till lately. An' best of all whin Irishmin wanted a home, which they

couldn't git annywhere else, Frinchmin gev it to thim. An' whin Ireland wanted help she sint her soldiers to help her. Look at the Frinch gineral that fought Orange William,"—this was a favorite figure with Mr. Grady and most exasperating to Mrs. Sullivan,—“look at Gineral Humbert landin' his throops on the shores o' Bantry Bay, look at what the great Napoleon said to Emmet, ‘me heart is wid ye, but me hands are full,’ look at—”

“Ay, luk, luk, luk,” cried Mrs. Sullivan with scorn, “its a wondher yer eyes are not turned round wid lukkin' backwards. Well, ould man, I luk to Saranac, an' I see what I see, an' I don't care for Napoleon or Emmet or anny other great gineral. What did they know about the Frinch in Saranac? An' I say I'll have none of 'em. You can have 'em all if you like.”

Mr. Grady did not reply. The warmth of the discussion had disturbed the entire household, and the appearance of Hugh put an end to it, much as that young man would like to have it continued for the sole purpose of hearing the lectures on universal history. He was to his astonishment still much impressed by the letter of Amedée LaRoche. It had taken such a hold of his fancy that try as he would he could not avoid picturing certain consequences sure to follow if its suggestions turned out facts. Hugh was not an imaginative man. He had few dreams, being altogether given to business, and too apt to pass over as trifling whatever would not bear reduction to dollars and cents, or had not some relation to them. But he said to himself again and again, what will happen to the DeLaunays if Ame-lée's letter tells the truth, and he went over all that he

knew about this interesting family, and labeled it in his mind for immediate need. He foresaw a long series of events, curious and dreadful, that might never happen and were yet possible, and might one day set themselves against pride, beauty, money and a good name.

When Amedée LaRoche ran away from Saranac, the firm whose funds he had spent to the sum of three thousand dollars, were David Winthrop and Howard DeLaunay. They were tanners. The former was a man of means *then*, the latter was a man of means *now*. The rich man had grown poor, and the poor man rich since that time. If there had been any harm done to Amedee LaRoche the junior partner had done it, for he was then poor and desperate, a stranger in the town, and, as he had many times shown himself, a hard, grasping, perhaps unprincipled man.

It was seventeen years since Mr. De Launay and his name had appeared in Saranac. Hugh, then a boy of eleven, recalled his well-dressed handsome figure clearly. In polish and education he and his were far above anything that had ever been seen in the town. Until this day Sullivan did not know whence De Launay came, or to what locality or tribe he might belong. His wife was a retired, brilliant-looking woman who never talked, and his only child a handsome creature of Hugh's age with a sharp tongue, a fondness for private theatricals, and considerable beauty. They were known to be poor on their arrival. In five years the senior partner in the tanning business sold his interest to DeLaunay, and the latter's fortune then made had rolled up to large figures since.

The story of the firm's gentleness in dealing with their clerk was often told and well known to everyone. Mr. DeLaunay agreed to bear two-thirds of the loss if Amedée were allowed to remain in exile unpunished. His motives were anything but sentimental or Christian.

"It will cost too much to find him," he said, "and when found we have nothing to get from him. Let him go to the devil so long as he keeps out of Saranac."

And that was the end of it, save for the mental agonies which the exile, who in his letters always admitted his guilt, and his lonely father and mother had endured for fifteen years.

"Pleasant dreams," thought Hugh, "they must give Mr. Howard DeLaunay, if he had any hand in causing 'em."

It was without any clear intention he questioned Tim Grady on the popular rumors concerning Amedée's flight.

"Amedée was a nice boy," said Mr. Grady reflectively. "Why, he must be a man o' thirty-six be this time. Yis, he's thirty-six. It's thirty-six years ago this very month since I shtud for him along wid Mrs. Surprenant."

"You his godfather?" cried Hugh.

"Shure, he's all mixed up wid 'em," said Mrs. Sullivan, "an' he bringin' in his anshent history to de-find 'em."

"I'm his godfather," said Mr. Grady. "I shtud for more children than any other man in Saranac, an' I say I never knew a nicer b'y than Amedée Patrick LaRoche. I gave him his middle name."

"And what happened to him that he should have turned out so badly?"

"What happens to any young man that drinks an' gambles, and goes with gamblers, as he did?" said Mr. Grady sadly. "We warned him, but it was no use. He was gone a week afore anywan knew what 'ad happened."

"It was a great pity," said Hugh.

"It was," assented Mr. Grady, "but he kin thank his shtars that he wasn't sent to Dannemora prison. If he had to deal wid ould Winthrop he'd be there to-day. Howard DeLaunay showed himself a gintleman that time, shure."

"I heard someone say once they didn't think he stole the money."

"Who stole it, thin?" said Mr. Grady. Hugh shrugged his shoulders, and received a threatening glance from his mother for this display of a French notion.

"That's what was done to me when I asked the question," said Hugh.

"There's no use talkin' o' these things," said Mr. Grady, as he refilled his glass with cider, "'tis my firrum belief, an' of everywan that was livin' then, that Amedée took that money, an' so ruined his parents an' himself."

Hugh felt a lightness of spirits after this positive declaration from the godfather of the exile, and troubled himself no more with old LaRoche's letter. For a time, however, he took pleasure in studying the elegant Mr. DeLaunay, as one looks upon the survivor of a great railway disaster; and seeing Miss DeLaunay's furs and velvets sweeping by occasionally, he fell

to wondering at the nimble, graceful feet that sometimes dance over hidden volcanoes.

CHAPTER III.

THE SENIOR PARTNER.

The letter to Osborne, Texas, was written and sent promptly, so that Hugh had a cheerful word to give LaRoche when the old man asked him about it. It was plain from the father's face that his mind had slipped into the old groove again, and that he could wish the letter had not been sent. The excitement of the holiday season, and the hint in Amedée's letter had worked together to disturb a cool disposition. Good sense had returned. He might have seen, too, that Hugh was half sorry for sending the letter, and between them arose a silent agreement to say no more about it.

It was a racing day for Saranac. A track had been made on the ice, and local trotters were flying by every moment. A crowd of men and boys were scattered along the ice track, the sun was shining, it was cold enough to freeze an Eskimo. Hugh was divided between a desire to see the races, and a wish to settle a money matter of six weeks standing with his friend John Winthrop. For in Saranac as elsewhere the poetic side of life had its place and its value in the market, and was not permitted to interfere with business. He decided in favor of Winthrop's private office, and John helped him to the decision by calling him in. The outer office was empty and the law-books had their backs turned in orderly fashion to the central stove. Winthrop was looking at this stove

when his friend entered. He had bought it of Hugh, and was not satisfied with it. Damon had sold Pythias a stove, shortly after the scaffold scene, and had beaten his Pythias four dollars on the value, the latter thought, and felt bad over it in consequence. This transaction might have looked ridiculous in ancient Syracuse, but in Saranac it was the correct thing; and better yet, Damon was come after his money to Pythias.

The two men really held a fine relationship towards each other, and only suspected its rare quality. They were Saranac born, in the same month of the same year. They had studied in the same school and from the moment their lives had come together a strong attraction had kept the two natures in close contact ever after. In twenty years they had not been a month apart. The same academy taught them the higher branches. When the war of the rebellion broke out they enlisted in the same regiment, and went through the four years without a wound or a separation. The study of law had confined Winthrop to an office, work on the lake steamers took Hugh away every other night from home, but left him an entire winter for leisure. They had a great love for each other, and never spoke of it, as is the custom with northern peoples. They had become used to it as they were used to the lake at their doors, whose beauties they never talked about unless to strangers, since feeling had long ago exhausted language on such matters.

All Saranac people have a fine taste for bargains. Winthrop was a descendant of the Puritans and Sullivan of Celtic princes; they differed in religious be-

lief for one was a Catholic and the other nothing at all; they differed in politics; the Celt was cool and unsentimental in this instance, because it chanced that the Saxon was a hot-headed enthusiast; he was fair and Sullivan was dark; but both were business men and appreciated the facts that Sullivan had sold his stove at a good price and Winthrop might have done better.

"It works fairly," said John, "but there is no ashpan and no check to the bottom draught. If I remember rightly when you sold it to me you said it was all there."

"So it was, what there was of it," said Hugh smiling.

"You'll have to let me off four dollars. Fourteen is a steep price for the old hulk, and those important parts wanting."

"I paid forty for it a few years ago," said Hugh, "you ought to feel rich over your bargain. I don't want to rake up old sores, but if you don't mind I'll put my ashpan against your breech-loader and the check against your never-to-be-forgotten meerschaum."

"These are painful memories, Hugh."

"They are. I'll forget them forever, though, if you will pay me for that stove, and maybe I might be weak enough to send you a new ashpan."

The lawyer paid. "What news?"

"Tim Grady is giving lessons in universal history to my mother."

"No?"

"Fact. I attended one myself."

"How does your mother take them?"

"As a hen takes water. You ought to get down

there some stormy day,—Tim always comes in a storm, —and take them in.”

“I would but the rehearsals are beginning —”

“I have an immense part,” said Hugh mournfully. “I am the hero.”

“And you are sorry for it,” said Winthrop with a groan, “with Miss DeLaunay for the heroine and so touching a character! I wish I could act a very little bit to get such a position.”

“You can’t act,” said Hugh consolingly, “not even the littlest bit. When you get out on the stage you are not yourself and you are not your character. You are a talking-machine. It’s good they give you little to say.”

“*You* are nothing extra,” said John.

“No. I am Hugh Sullivan all through. When I weep I cry as I used at school after a flogging, when I laugh the deck shakes. I wouldn’t do for Gaston De Pumpkin, but as a plain, American sea-captain I am matchless. Now this Ingomar business of Miss De Launay’s is to my taste. As a barbarian, savage or tame, I have only to be natural, and the make-up will do the rest.”

“Perhaps you could tell me why at least I can’t be John Winthrop,” said the lawyer.

“Oh, that’s delicate ground,” Hugh replied, and at once a chillness followed their former heartiness of manner. They dropped the rehearsal and talked business, in which Sullivan never lost interest. Winthrop’s mind, while his tongue wagged, ran upon the peculiar fitness of his friend for the part of Ingomar. Miss DeLaunay made a beautiful and clever Parthenia, and to be her savage captor, to undergo the magi-

cal transformation which her tact and love brought about in his savage heart seemed a blissful process to John Winthrop. He would have given much to know just what Hugh thought about it. His pretence of indifference might be honest. Winthrop thought it a pretence for one or two good reasons. Hugh was a handsome gentleman whom many believed worthy of such a woman as Parthenia, and although he had no more than a slight acquaintance with her family Parthenia herself had invited him earnestly to take an important part in the drama, and had said to Winthrop and others, he has the very air of the mountain prince. As if, thought John, not one of us were like him; and he strode once around the room after the manner of a tragedian.

"Got the toothache?" said Hugh in sympathy

"No. Keep on with your story of the horse bargain." Hugh did not notice the sarcastic tone as if Winthrop would like to have added, you talk of nothing else. The lawyer went on with his speculations until the door opened and his father entered.

"Good-day, boys." He staggered into a chair with a heavy sigh.

"Good racing down below," he stuttered when his breath had returned to him. "Wonder you boys weren't there."

"I was just going," said his son. "I'll run down and see what Merritt's colt can do, and come back immediately."

The old man buried his face in the newspaper until the door had closed on him, and then looked at Hugh with a sad but knowing smile.

"He's dodging me you see, Sullivan. He hasn't

allowed me to speak to him alone since I found out"—he paused for a moment—"what I suppose you all know"—another pause—"that he is visiting De Launay's too often."

Hugh looked away and said nothing.

"I have nothing against the girl. If he wants to marry her I don't object. But Hugh"—with a suddenly broken voice—"I know them. She will never care for him. They will certainly oppose him. If his heart gets fixed on her, and for nothing, I'm afraid—I know what will happen. DeLaunay gave me the first knock-down I ever got. It wouldn't be strange if he got a chance to give me the last."

Hugh felt a new interest in Amedée LaRoche and his recent letter. He had never been so near the secrets of the old firm as now, and with his usual audacity attempted to seize one of them

"I never heard just how he happened to down you," said he.

"It was not downing. He caught me at a nice moment, and pushed me out of a business I had built up. I cared little then for I had better schemes on hand. But it was his meanness that made me mad. I took him in when he had nothing but a bare one thousand to his name. I thought he had more. He made me believe so. Oh, he was clever, more so than I was. He made his money out of me, and then when I was squeezed tight in a wheat trouble dumped me."

"It wasn't exactly dishonesty, or anything of that sort?"

"If it had been," said Winthrop with animation, "I'd have put him in jail and kept him there. If I

could only, before I die, get my hands on his throat that way he'd be dead first. No, it was strictly a business trick. He was making money, and he couldn't let gratitude stand in the way. I began to go down from that. He went up. I guess it will be so to the end."

"You don't remember Amedée LaRoche, do you?" said Hugh with some excitement.

"We called him Stone," said Winthrop. "I remember him. You didn't know him, did you?"

"His father showed me a letter from him a few days back. He seemed to be a smart fellow."

"Very. He bled us for three thousand. DeLau-nay bore the most of it to save the boy from jail. I thought it kind of him then. Now I often wonder what trick he played on the boy that made him so kind."

Hugh was electrified by the last remark.

"You suspected nothing since?"

"Why," said Winthrop laughing. "I have suspected everything. For years I have watched every step he took, and had his whole life looked up by detectives. He has a clean record, so much the worse for me. But if ever I catch him tripping, if he ever gives me a chance to down him, there'll be a fall, my countrymen, which Julius Cæsar's was'nt nothing to."

Hugh had a great respect for old Winthrop, and was pained at the evil look which accompanied these words. It was plain that but for the scaffold he would like to strangle Howard DeLaunay with his own hands; seeing Hugh's astonishment he said:

"It sounds bloodthirsty, and perhaps I don't mean half of it. But it expresses my feelings to a dot.

Now what riles me more is this affair of John's. That girl will take his mind away from him, and then bounce him. You know as well as I do what would happen then. I don't find any fault with the thing itself. I'm in favor of it. But, Hugh, I want that boy to live as long as I do. I can't bear to think of him lying in my house dead, and me looking at him.

"See here," said Hugh, roughly breaking in upon this strain of feeling, "don't sniffle over a fancy. I hope it won't happen but it *has* happened to better men than you. They bore it, and so must you, if it comes. You've a good bit to blame yourself. You brought the boy up that way. He used to make me shiver in the army with his talk. He always said if he were taken prisoner or badly wounded he would end his life himself."

"Many a soldier did it," said Winthrop, "religious ones too."

"Not from principle though as you would," said Hugh sourly.

"Well, every man to his own taste," Winthrop answered. "What can I do to save this boy of mine."

"Nothing. He is all right. I have no doubt he will marry Miss DeLaunay if he wishes. It will be a nice, tip-top way of settling all troubles between the parents."

"But how about this broken life of mine," Winthrop said with feeling, "who will ever pay me for that?"

"I don't know. I am sure of one thing. There's a place where all broken things are made whole again, or smashed to nothing. Your case is referred there."

David Winthrop was a broken man. His white hair and sunken eyes were not however as painful to him as his withered fortunes. The memory of a long and useless struggle to retrieve what he had lost was fixed in his mind and made his thoughts and his words bitter. Hope no longer lighted his dull eye or warmed his chilled heart. His hopes had never been higher than his own nature. To be a power in the county and to die rich had been the only ambition of his life, and he was dying in middle age poor and insignificant and spiteful, without dignity and with bad humor. The world laughed at him even while it admitted his meriting a better fate, and snubbed him when he bought present glory with the bitter narration of past fame. It was an open secret, he had himself during a fit of emotion declared that his son's happiness alone prevented him from putting an end to a wretched life. It seemed motive enough for suicide that his career was ended. Only the stronger motive of John's comfort prevented a catastrophe.

To Hugh's last remark the old gentleman shrugged his shoulders. Just then the door opened and the elegant DeLaunay himself entered with velvety briskness and looked around.

"Good-day, Winthrop," he said. "Is your son in?"

"Take a chair and wait for him," said Winthrop; "he'll be in directly—just stepped out to see a race."

"Captain Sullivan," said Mr. DeLaunay as he took the chair, "we hope to see you at the rehearsal tomorrow evening."

"I'm going to take a whack at my part now," Hugh replied as he left the room, laughing over the

pleasant *tete-a tete* of the two men. His mind was impressed with one thing. He did not say aloud to his own thoughts, he only knew he was glad that a letter had been sent to Osborne, Texas.

CHAPTER IV.

A REHEARSAL.

Mrs. Sullivan observed her son's preparation for a visit to DeLaunay's with a disdainful eye. It was the night of the second rehearsal, and whereas Hugh disliked amateur theatricals and fidgeted much over his promise to take part, to-night he felt a decent interest in the work and got himself up with care. His mother went on muttering asides not complimentary to Miss DeLaunay and the young maids of whom she was the chief in beauty and wealth. The old lady in common with most Irish mothers of the day, had a great jealousy of any woman who showed interest in her son. She could not make up her mind to hand him over to another woman, and although she cheerfully admitted to Tim Grady that the boy must go some day to his own house, her taste would not be suited with any young lady in Saranac. Her French neighbors in the county were never done marrying, or discussing the preliminaries to marriage. A girl having reached sixteen was whisked into long dresses so suddenly that only her own friends recognized her on the street. When a boy had attained his majority he might marry at once, and often he married before. And on those occasions so great was the rejoicing of all parties that Mrs. Sullivan's contempt for French notions was mingled with a great fear of

losing her own children in the same speedy way. She did lose her daughter, but Captain Hugh remained firm. The rehearsals threatened her peace of mind once more, and when Hugh sat down after dressing to fondle the children and chat for an hour she began her philippic against theatricals.

Hugh was deeply in love with his own home and his relatives. His sister's children seemed to him like his own. Their pretty and sincere love for him, shown in many ways, touched his heart. For their mother, a pale, patient, sweet-tempered woman, he had the love of the brother and the friend. All were now dependent on him. When the idea of marriage presented itself occasionally in a cloudy fashion to his mind he thought rather of these four souls so closely knit to his and could not see any separation from them which would bring him more happiness. He was not an over sensitive man. His fiber was a trifle coarse in some places. His nature was deep however and honest, and he had the strong affections for his own peculiar to the race from which he sprang.

"Reharsals," Mrs. Sullivan said with irony. "Has Regina DeLaunay nothin' else to do wid her money than throw it away an ould plays that the divil was father of?"

"Why, mother," protested Mrs. Lajeunesse.

"Well, it may be different in this counthry," said the mother in apology, "but at home ye might as well go an' sell yerself body an' sowl to ould Nick as turn play acthor. Here they think no more of it than gittin divorced an' marryin' agin as often as they like."

"I'll tell Miss DeLaunay what you say," Hugh said gravely, "and perhaps she will let me off."

"That she may," very fervently. "The toboggan was bad enough, but the reharesals are worse. I tould Tim Grady about 'em, an' he said no good could come of all this paintun', an' powdherin', an' huggin', an' killin', an' the other goins-on yez do be havin' at 'em."

"I'll never do it again," said Hugh as he put on his coat, and went out. He felt a kind of exhilaration as he stepped into the road. The DeLaunays had suddenly become an object of interest to him. It was like a situation in a play. Power and wealth were reigning respectably on a hill as it were, and shame was threatening both with an overthrow. Hugh would not have a part in it for all the money in DeLaunay's possession, but he was curious to see how near so suave, so elegant, so clever a man as he could come to ruin and escape it.

It was intensely cold, fully twenty below zero. In the north such a temperature is dry and pleasant, even healthful. The moon was shining. The hard packed snow glittered in its light. Out on the lake a cleared space lighted with torches was crowded with skaters, and farther on stood the toboggan slide bright with Chinese lanterns and noisy with the rush of toboggans and the laughing of the crowd. Sleighs were passing along the road every minute to the music of their bells. The DeLaunay mansion stood on the lake road. It was a solid, roomy, handsome building of the old style, enlarged but not improved under De Launay's ownership. A fine park surronded it. All the front windows shone with light. The old brass knocker still hung on the door though no longer used, and in the central hall a majestic stairway of polished

oak rose stately and slow to the next floor. It was a house of refinement and comfort. Hugh noticed some things which on his first visit escaped him. A few touches here and there in the shape of a picture, a statue, a crucifix hinted at the presence of a Catholic in the household. Then he recalled the fact that Mr. DeLaunay was supposed to be of that faith, his own word and his regular contribution to its needs being the witnesses. There was no other evidence. His wife and daughter were most amiable and indifferent believers in nothing.

The amateur actors were assembled in the green room, a back apartment of green tints which was to serve as the green-room when the play appeared. It remained in Hugh's memory a long time as the setting of some peculiar scenes in connection with this history. Hugh was the last arrival, and received too much attention thereby. The popular captain of the lake steamer seemed to improve in manly beauty with the improvement in his surroundings, and each person present had a pleasant word for him. His entrance inspired them. Unconsciously he was a leader, and Miss DeLaunay had to admit, much against her will, that his influence reached even herself.

The rehearsal began with spirit. Papa DeLaunay was an enthusiastic amateur and played father to Parthenia in an earnest, gentlemanly way. Hugh felt like a detective as he watched him, and tried hard to keep his eyes and thoughts on commonplace things. The elegant appearance of DeLaunay jarred him. His silver-white hair did not suit the head of a criminal. The fine aristocratic features, the white hands, and graceful form opposed the notion of crime and

sin. Looking at the richness of the room Hugh thought of Dannemora prison and the Texan plains. He was simple-minded enough to be horrified by these contrasts, which had pleased and thrilled him in dramas. DeLaunay was conscious of the Captain's interested gaze, and sat beside him in an interval.

"Well, what do you think of me as an actor?" he said.

Hugh, conscious of two senses in the question, fidgeted.

"You do well for an old man," he said.

The old man laughed. He had a musical throat. In his face there was scarcely a wrinkle.

"What are you laughing at?" said Hugh.

"I am only fifty-five," he answered. "I don't call that old."

"Nor I. You are a very clever actor," said Hugh with a seriousness that evidently startled Mr. De Launay. He looked sharply for an instant at Hugh, and then excused himself politely to resume his place in the play. It was not possible that conscience ever troubled a man with so serene a face and so benevolent an expression. But Hugh in his innocence of finer human sensibilities fancied his last remark had struck home. Had Mr. DeLaunay remained a few minutes longer he might have said harsher things for the guilty conscience. The rehearsal went on, and Ingomar's acting gave every one special delight, and tortured John Winthrop with envy of it. He could act like a gentleman in his part, but it had no effect and had nothing to do with beautiful Parthenia, whose melting eyes looked tenderly on Hugh and whose white hands clasped Hugh's rougher ones in the scenes

between the savage chief and his captive. Miss De Launay was in love with Hugh's acting, although she knew he would amount to little in any other part. He was simply Hugh Sullivan, the captain of a lake steamer, in all that he did, and his orders to his savage band were given in the tone he would use to lazy deck-hands. But it was well done for an amateur, it was dashing, and she was satisfied. Then she saw that he was interested in her, that he surrendered to her charms (in the play) as if he were thinking of a real surrender in every day life. It was the last idea in his mind, however. He was wondering if in real life Miss Regina DeLaunay would be so royally brave for her father's sake, and would make such sacrifices for him as Parthenia made for her parent.

Mrs. DeLaunay complimented him on his acting. She was a quiet-mannered woman, languid without being offensive, and did not seem to depend very much on her husband or daughter for her own comforts.

"It is pleasant for Regina to have an actor beside her," she said, "it gives her an occasion to exert herself."

Hugh thought irreverently that Mr. DeLaunay had never been the occasion of great exertion for his wife.

"I hope you will be friends," continued Madame, "if for no other reason than to keep up these private theatricals. I admire them."

"Miss DeLaunay has so many friends," said Hugh.

"Not at all," replied the lady frankly, "she has not five in Saranac and New York together. That is her own affair. But it can be said to her credit that she has no enemies."

Hugh wondered much at the contrast between the lady's languid manner and her strong expressions.

"John Winthrop would give much to act as you do," said Mrs. DeLaunay, "you are great friends I believe?"

"Went to school together, fought through the war side by side, ma'am."

"A pity you cannot act alike," with mild sarcasm.

The rehearsal ended, tea was served in the green room and Regina did her Ingomar the honor of talking with him ten minutes, to the intense jealousy of Winthrop. It was not a pleasant conversation by any means. Hugh watched her much as an old Roman might have regarded a Christian soon to be thrown to the lions, without being conscious that such observation might be offensive, and Regina, who wished to be divinely gracious to a plebian who acted so beautifully, was dismayed to find that Mr. Sullivan was not aware of her graciousness.

"It is natural with some people to act well," said Regina, thinking of her own talents. "It must be natural to you."

"Not at all," said Hugh, "I feel at first like a pig on ice. Afterwards I feel like a fish in a frying-pan. But there's plenty of fun in it."

"You are a born Ingomar," said she, sure that in real life the barbarian chief would have talked in Grecian parlors of pigs and fish and frying-pans.

"I would like to have been the real thing," he replied.

She was touched with the compliment and the earnest look that went with it.

"For the sake of the real Parthenia?" she said sweetly.

"No, for the sake of the life. There must have been a pile of money in it," he said, thoughtfully.

"I see you have your fortune to make yet, Mr. Sullivan."

He became suddenly aware of her sarcasm.

"Every man," he said laughing, "has that to do. He has the choice too of getting it honestly, or by playing Ingomar."

"Perhaps," she answered slyly, "your talent for acting might be of use to you there."

"It has helped many a man," said Hugh with a glance towards her father, which of course had no meaning to her. When she moved away to entertain another of the party Miss Regina felt that her ten minutes had been wasted. Hugh Sullivan was not only stupid but coarse, and seemed to know nothing of the refinements of thought and speech. Pigs and fish and frying-pans! She complained of him to John Winthrop.

"You know how he has been brought up," said John, "his people are somewhat dull and rough, and I suppose he followed them. Mere Irish you know."

"I am mere Irish," she said with dignity.

"Not at all," answered John cheerfully. "You have some of the Celtic blood in you, but it is blue not red. And your training, and your parents, Miss DeLaunay, and your creed. These are important circumstances. You are not merely Irish."

"No, I suppose not," mollified, "but if he is only what he is how could you have grown up together so intimate and friendly—Damon and Pythias, you know."

Mr. Winthrop snapped his fingers,—mentally at the legend. Physically he never did such a thing.

"Damon and Pythias," he said, "were only a circumstance to us. Probably that Hugh Sullivan, whose fibre is a little too coarse for you, saved my life at the risk of his own a half dozen times. We had the fever both. You ought to have seen his gentleness as a nurse. He has the fibre of a man, Miss DeLaunay. I suppose he cannot make drawing-room speeches, and talks of coal and steam and money—"

"And pigs and fish and frying-pans," she added

"That's a matter of taste," he said smiling. "I know he's deficient in the finer sense. But if you like a man, brave, honest, religious, superstitious, too—all Catholics are superstitious—your Ingomar is a specimen not to be found everywhere."

"How very kind of you to say so. You interest me in him very much. I do admire a brave man, a strong one. I like to watch the lake boatmen in summer. Such vigor, such muscle! But they swear dreadfully."

John was satisfied. The jealousy which pinched his heart when he thought of Hugh's acting had no reason for existence. Miss DeLaunay could never endure a man who talked of pigs in a parlor, and that was Hugh's fashion although he was anything but vulgar or stupid. Therefore he listened with pleasure to the parting compliments which Hugh received.

"You will not fail us," said Regina earnestly, "at the next rehearsal. We cannot do without you."

"I know it," he answered, "and I shall get around. But my mother is very much set against private theatricals. She says in Ireland you might as well sell your soul to the devil as turn play-actor."

"I must call on her, and change that opinion," said Regina sweetly.

"There is another side to Mrs. Sullivan's opposition," John said when all were gone. He was laughing "In her eyes there is no one like her son, and she dreads the moment when beauty will take him from her."

Regina joined in his laugh. The idea that a mere Irish peasant woman should fear to lose her son to the princess of Saranac was very amusing. Hugh heard her sweet laugh as he stepped onward down the avenue, and a touch of sadness came upon him. What a pity if the happiness which made her heart so light should suddenly be buried under black ruin. He felt a sudden wish to prevent such a catastrophe even at the expense of justice, and he determined in any case to have nothing to do with La Roche and his scapegrace son. For the second time he was sorry the letter had been sent to Osborne, Texas.

CHAPTER V.

THE LETTER FROM TEXAS.

When Captain La Roche touched Hugh's arm one night on the street and asked him to call at his house before nine o'clock he understood at once that a letter had arrived from Amedée. He answered shortly that it was too stormy a night and he had other business. The tone might have warned La Roche against pressing his invitation.

"I have a letter," said he, "from my son. I'm goin' to 'ave DeLaunay arrested to-morrow."

Hugh turned upon him fiercely.

"How many have you told of this thing?" he said.

"No one but the ol' woman. She's so tickled—I never saw anyone take on as she does. But we 'aven't tol' no one till we know what we're goin' to do."

"I'll go down with you now," said Hugh. In spite of his own wishes he was forced to enter into a matter which boded so much evil to Regina DeLaunay, if only to protect her. He could not bear the thought of disgrace and sorrow coming to her, and being man of the world enough to know that publicity might be prevented in many ways he resolved then and there "to see her through it." It was a bitter night. The wind and the falling snow together made the time mournful. It seemed to Hugh as they plodded along the lighted streets that the people must know of the letter which LaRoche carried. By one of those coincidences so ironical and frequent they met most of the parties interested in the letter. Mr. O Grady came out of the post-office and greeted them, old Winthrop hobbled by, and Regina with her father flew past in a sleigh. LaRoche thinking of his letter paid no heed.

The house-kitchen was a welcome spot on such a night. The wood stove threw out its grateful heat on the small neat room which Madame LaRoche kept always in spotless condition. The kerosene lamp, a dolphin erect on his tail in the attempt to swallow a glass bowl, was lighted and standing on its red knit cushion. The altar to the Mother of God, with blue, red and yellow cardlesticks, the crucifix above it, the holy water bottle and the blessed candle beside it had its proper corner. The rag carpet was madame's own

weaving. The rosebushes and geraniums on the shelf were her particular care. This was the room in which for fifteen years she had wept and prayed for the vindication of her son. Hugh when he looked on her calm worn face thought suddenly of his own mother and felt a pity that was new to him for the woman. Her face now was joyful, but alas it would never lose the expression of sorrow fixed there by long grieving. Joy only lighted it strongly, but could not dispel the lines of grief. After all, he thought, it was only fair that the DeLaunays should taste the woe they had dealt to others. Madame LaRoche gravely welcomed Hugh. She regarded him highly.

"I want you," said La Roche, "to read the letter to the ol' woman. You see I only tol' her 'ow it was. I'm not a good reader you know. But I made it out for myself. You kin give it to her straight."

He was nervous and could not speak without trembling. When he handed the letter to Hugh his hands shook. The poor mother fixed her eyes on it with an expression that went to Hugh's heart. Her sole hope was there. The captain locked the door and read in a low tone the strange story which Amedée La Roche had written in distant Texas.

"Dear father and mother," it began, "I don't know how to write this letter. I am afraid of myself since I received Mr. Sullivan's letter. He told me the whole story, how that — — villain DeLaunay —"

"He forgot himself," said the father.

"Who could blame 'im," answered the mother bowing to the crucifix over the altar.

—"gave out that I had stolen over three thousand dollars," Hugh continued. "And so everyone has

believed. That is what the fellows from Saranac that I met out here meant when they said puzzling things to me. But I must tell my own story at once, that you and mother may know the exact truth. Poor mother, what she must have suffered for me only God will ever know."

Madame LaRoche bent her head and resolutely held back the tears that rushed to her eyes.

"Mon pauvre fils," she thought, "c'est lui qui a souffert."

"Here is the truth about the money I was said to have stolen from the firm. The week before I left I had been drinking pretty hard, and gambling, too, and most of my money had gone that way. I was not short in my accounts. I had not taken one cent from the firm. I never did. Often when I was out of money I took ten or twenty dollars from the safe. Both members of the firm knew it. I have taken as high as fifty dollars, and they did not object.

"When I got out this time I took fifty dollars and spent it quickly on drink. Then I took fifty more. It was one o'clock in the morning when I went to the office to take the second fifty. I was half drunk, but I had my senses. I had no idea of stealing. The boys were waiting for me in the saloon. I knew I could pay it back in the morning. I did not feel like a thief. I never stole in my life. You remember that well"

"Remember," said LaRoche, with a sudden burst of feeling. "He was the honest boy, Hugh, that you never saw. He might drink an' gamble, but it went agin his grain to steal."

"I did not light the lamp. I went straight to the

safe, and with a candle to see by opened it and took out the money. There was yet two hundred dollars there. When I closed the safe and turned round to go out there was DeLaunay standing with a pistol pointed at me. 'You thief,' he said."

Madame LaRoche gave a slight shriek, and her husband to keep back the oath that sprang to his lips gripped the back of his chair.

"I am no thief," I said. "I have a right to be here. I have taken a hundred dollars, but I shall put it back when it is wanted"

"You go to jail this moment," he said, keeping the pistol pointed at me. "You are a common burglar. I have caught you in the act of breaking into this office and stealing from this safe. You will get five years in Dannemora for this. You must come with me now to the constable. If you try to escape I will shoot you."

"Then I thought of you, mother, and my heart failed. I begged of him for your sake to let me off. I offered to work a year without wages if he would let me go. He would not. I was getting ready to do something desperate when he said, 'Your parents are decent people, you are a disgrace to them. If you will start at once for Texas, and have no communication with your friends for a year you can go. I was glad to get such an offer. He provided me with money for my fare, but warned me if I broke the conditions he would clap me in jail at any time.'"

"I went past our house on my way to the railroad, and saw the light in the kitchen."

"It was this very lamp," said Madame.

"I knew you were waiting for me, mother, as you

always did, even when I was worst. I wanted to go in and kiss you good-bye, but DeLaunay had forbidden it. I looked in the window and saw you sitting there with your beads in your hand, waiting to hear my knock, and it broke my heart, mother, to think how long you might wait and never hear it again. Then you looked up, and for fear that you might see my face, I stole away."

"But I saw it, *mon Dieu*," cried out Madame, tears of anguish streaming down her face. She rose and went to the window to point out the very pane against which the wind had piled high the snow.

"I saw his face 'ere," she said; "I thought it was a ghost. W'en he not come back that night, nex' mornin' I said my boy is dead."

She returned to her seat, drying her eyes. Captain LaRoche put another log in the stove.

"I was on the boat then," he said, "but the women-folks said she took on terrible. She was al'ays certain of seein' the face agin the glass. It seems now she did."

Hugh resumed his reading.

"I got to Texas, and have stayed here ever since. I had a hope, that my stay here would not be long. I tried to be good for a while, but when hope went I got reckless. I have been anything but a good man, mother. But when I got Mr. Sullivan's letter, and when I read of the lies told about me in Saranac I felt that God was punishing me for my sins"

"I took one hundred dollars. I did not steal them. If DeLaunay says I took three thousand dollars he lies. He took the money himself, and then laid it to me. That was why he sent me to Texas. That was

why he sent me letters without date or name threatening me if I came back I would go to jail. I understand it well. Now, father, you must try to get me back. If I stay in Texas much longer I will die. I have been to confession and communion. I have a new scapular. I am trying by praying to God to get justice. Oh, how I have suffered for fifteen years, for what I never did."

Madame LaRoche could control herself no longer, and burst into violent sobbing, the father was silent and busied himself with the fire. The letter ended at this point abruptly with an appeal for an immediate answer. There was sorrowful silence for a long time. When Madame was calm once more LaRoche said :

"Any way, ol' woman, you're satisfied with your boy that he ain't no thief."

"I knew he wasn't, always."

"An' to morrow after I get Mr. DeLaunay arrested," he said to Hugh, "you k'n write an' tell the boy we're doin' what we kin to help him."

Hugh did not reply except by a nod of his head. He had seen the expression on the Captain's face as he folded the letter and put it carefully in his pocket, a half smile around the lips, anger and agony in the eyes and the lines of the face, violent determination in the glance he gave the letter. To turn him from any purpose formed under such emotion would be a thankless task. He simply said :

"You must not be in a hurry, whatever you do"

"That's true," answered the pilot quietly. "I've waited nigh onto fifteen years. Not much of a hurry is it?"

"A mistake now would add fifteen years to that."

"Oh, I'll get a lawyer. It'll cost money, but if it took every cent I have that man must pay for what he did."

"I wish you would take my advice," said Hugh, after doing some rapid thinking.

"Not if it goes agin arrestin' Mr. DeLaunay."

"That is not the way to talk, Joe," said Madame severely. "Mr. Sullivan is our friend. Do as he says. We can wait some more. Don't get mad w'en Amedée is all right."

"You see," said Hugh, having no doubt whatever of DeLaunay's guilt, "when DeLaunay put this charge on your son he insisted on his seeing none of his friends for a year. I don't know much about the case, but I suspect he wished to fix everything in that year so that Amedée could never prove anything against him. He is a rich man now. The books that Amedée kept you remember were all falsified. He may have destroyed these books. Suppose you arrest him to-morrow, and a trial takes place next week. Where are your witnesses? Who is going to prove that DeLaunay stole the money and put the crime on your son? And if the case is thrown out, what will prevent him from getting damages out of you, and taking away your property?"

The good sense of this came home to La Roche and angered him the more against the man whose position in spite of his crime was yet so strong.

"If he did that," he answered swinging the iron poker suggestively, "I would kill him."

Madame LaRoche made the sign of the cross, and bowed in apology to the crucifix.

"Of course I don't mean I'd do such a thing," said

her husband with a nervous laugh, "but I would feel like it. A poor man 'as no show agin a rich one. I know that."

"I don't," Hugh replied shortly, "but the poor man must use his wits and his money, and not fight when he's sure to get whipped."

After long hesitation and thought LaRoche said,—

"W'at would you advise me to do?"

"See the priest. He's the safest man to take advice from."

The frown on LaRoche's brow lightened. For a moment he had suspected Hugh of an intention to turn him from his purpose. He became frank once more, and allowed Hugh to talk freely on the best way to attack DeLaunay. Delay was all the young man wanted. He could not see his way clearly to helping Regina, because he felt that justice must be done the poor vagabond in Texas, and this suffering household. How to do it with as little disgrace for Regina as possible was his problem. It occurred to him that if once old David Winthrop got these facts in his hands, nothing would save DeLaunay from the penalty of his crime.

"The pries'," said LaRoche, "is a good man. I think, ol' woman, I'll go up an' talk with him to-morrow."

"He is our true frien'," said Madame. "He 'as al'ays said with us, 'Your poor boy is innocent.'"

"I think we owe 'im some pew rent, an' I kin bring it up to 'im at the same time. I'll go up the first thing in the mornin',"

"Would you like to have me go with you?" said Hugh.

"It would be the best thing for me," La Roche answered readily. "About ten o'clock's the time, an' I kin meet you at the hotel."

Madame had begun to light all the candles on the little altar, and when Hugh went to the door the room was in a blaze of light.

"On doit remercier le bon Dieu pour ses graces," she said to her husband. "Il a trouvé notre fils."

"Good night," said the Captain.

"Mille remerciements, Monsieur Sullivan," said Madame with deep emotion.

"Pas de quoi," Hugh answered, stopping to take a second look at the little altar. "Say a prayer for me there please. Prayers must be heard from such a beautiful shrine as that. Good night."

He plunged into the storm. The fine, dry snow dashed into his face as he went up the street. A sleigh laden with furs stood before a residence, and Regina DeLaunay was coming down the steps to take a seat in it. She did not recognize him in the darkness and storm. He was studying at that moment what possible plan could be devised to save her from shame and yet restore to honor and usefulness the poor exile in Texas.

CHAPTER VI.

VENGEANCE DELAYED

A sleepless night left Captain La Roche with confused ideas and disturbed emotions. At first it seemed the right thing to do, to consult the priest. But he had dreamed of his boy tramping through Texas, after all his education and the promise of his youth ;

he feared Hugh Sullivan was not interested enough in proving his boy's innocence, being a friend of De Launay and a friend of the priest. How could he trust these people until DeLaunay was safely in jail. He told his wife this.

"Mr. DeLaunay won't stay long in jail," she replied. "He can give bail for thousands."

"Anyway I'm going to have him arrested," he said. "Then I can see the priest afterwards."

Madame did not attempt to change the will of the stubborn pilot. She was arranging the table for breakfast, and now began to light the candles on the altar.

"What again!" cried LaRoche. "Is this a church we have. But we cannot take up a collection every Sunday to pay for candles." He spoke in French seriously. Nevertheless he knelt down beside her to say his prayers and thank God for restoring to him his son. The door opened while they were praying, and Sol Tuttle came in with a blast of wind and snow which put out most of the candles. He dropped on his knees and waited until they had ended.

"Reckon you're late or I'm early," said Sol comfortably seating himself. He was thoroughly at home in LaRoche's company, and lighted his pipe immediately. "I hadn't said any prayers so fur, but I hev hed breakfast. So jes' pitch in an' don't mind me. This idee of a altar in the house strikes me as pretty cute, Joe. You can't forgit your prayers even if you wanted to."

"It's the taste of the women folks," LaRoche explained.

"It's the best o' taste," said Sol. "I know you hain't got no such taste, cap'in, 'cause you're bringin'

up wan't jes' what it hed ought to be. I believe in prayer, an' I reckon I believe in altars, too, s'long as Mrs La Roche hes faith in 'em."

"I 'ave a little news for you this mornin,'" said La Roche with gravity. "It's big news for us, an' we're goin' to keep it quite for a time. I 'ad a letter from Amedée yestiddy, an' he says he didn't steal no three thousand dollars, an' he's soon comin' home to prove who did, an' I'm thinkin' of arrestin' Mr. DeLaunay for puttin' up a job on the boy for a thing he never did."

Madame LaRoche was not surprised at this outburst before an old friend of the family. The captain attacked his breakfast savagely while talking, and enjoyed the surprise expressed in his friend's face.

Sol had laid aside his pipe for a moment, and was adjusting the information to his emotions.

"That beats me holler," he said.

Time had already beaten Sol so hollow that it was difficult to conceive of anything which could increase his hollowness. He resumed his smoking.

"Better tell him, too," said Madam shrewdly, "that Mr. Sullivan advised ye to go to the priest afore you did anything else."

"So he did," asserted LaRoche, "an' I'm not goin'." Sol laid down his pipe hastily.

"Yes you are goin' to the priest," said he with such earnestness that the captain laughed. "Yes, you are a goin' to the priest, an' I'm a-goin' too, for to take the pledge that I broke last month. Joe, it don't be come you to talk so slightin' of a good man. He oughter hev known this news about little Amedée afore us all."

Madame LaRoche smiled to herself at this emphatic expression of opinion.

"You think so," said LaRoche irritably.

"There air a class o' men," Sol answered after a long pause, "like the condemned pickerel we ketch out on the bridge, all mouth; jest the same, they don't know how to choose their vittles. In other words they don't know a good thing when they see it."

"Well, we can go, it won't do no one no harm," said the captain, "but I mean to arrest DeLaunay anyway, an' make him tell jes' what he did to my boy in front o' the hull town."

"You got a mighty big contract on hand," Sol replied, "not but what it oughter be done. But I'd rayther contract to land twenty black bass an hour in this ere weather than to hev anything to do with bringin' DeLaunay to court."

The two men went together to the residence of the parish priest discussing this point. LaRoche made a show of stopping at the hotel to look for Hugh Sullivan, and not seeing him after a half glance around hurried away much relieved. His suspicions of Hugh were growing stronger. Seated in a convenient corner Hugh saw his behavior and did not attempt to show himself. He was satisfied that the priest would give LaRoche much stronger advice than he desired.

The snow was deep and the walk to the church toilsome and difficult. Streets were blocked up, the church was remote from the center of the village, the wind blew hard. The veterans scarcely noticed these things. All around the church and residence lay immense drifts of snow, and the northwest wind was

adding constantly to the heap. They rang the bell at the office-door, and were admitted to a small well-furnished room, smelling of comfort. Father McManus was at home, and came in promptly, in cassock and barretta, a plump, brisk, plain-featured man of a pleasant manner.

"Good morning, Mr. LaRoche; Mr. Tuttle, I am glad to see you."

Then he sat down and waited for the matter of their visit to be introduced.

"We both have a little business with you," said the captain, "but I guess, Sol, you'd better put in yours now as it is the shortest."

"I come up to take the pledge for a year," said Sol briefly.

"You broke the last one too soon," said the priest.

"I'll allow I did, Mr. McManus, an' I allow also that Sairey wuz ez much to blame at the start ez I wuz. It wa'n't her fault neither. It wa'n't mine at the start, but you see I come home wet one day, an' took a fit o' shiverin', an' she packed me right to bed, piled on the blankets, an' brought me some hot whisky.

"Sez I, 'Sairey, I won't take it, sez she, Sol you've got to. I admire your pluck, sez she, but I ain't a-goin' to nuss you through another spell o' rheumatiz, sez she, and pay more money for doctor's bill an' medicine than you'd spend in whisky in three years. Well, sez I, if you say so, I'll drink it, but you've got to take the consequences. I must say, Mr. McManus, I was kinder reconciled to it. Sairey dosed me putty well for three days. Then I was well, an' if I'd a-

stopped thar, I reckon things would have been squar. I didn't stop. I went on a three days' toot, an' I broke Sairey up. She cried and scolded, and between us we made life right mis'able. Sez I yistiday, I've hed enough. This thing hez got to stop. So I come up here to do what I think is right, an' to take the pledge."

"Very good," said the priest, "just go down on your knees and repeat these words after me please."

"I promise the Almighty God that for one year I will abstain from all intoxicating drinks, and that I will do my best to discountenance the use of liquor in others. Amen."

Sol repeated the first part of the pledge, but at the second part hesitated and looked at LaRoche who fidgetted in his chair.

"You see," the latter explained, "he sells liquor."

"Last year if you'll remember," said Sol, "I said that part another way."

"Do you keep a saloon," asked the priest.

"No, I'm glad to say I don't. I supply a few friends with whisky from Canada. I don't trade with hard drinkers, only with respectable people. I kin promise to discourage any but those I trade with. There aint no need o' discouragin' them, for they're sober decent people."

The pledge was so given, and Sol rose from his knees.

"I'm thankful to ye, Mr. McManus, an' I'm comin' up sometime to hear you preach" he said. "I've heern ye're a tip-top preacher, an' I believe in preachin'."

"Now that he's done I'd like to pay ye last quarter's pew-rent, father," said the captain, eager to let his friend understand that he supported the church.

This business was promptly despatched, and then LaRoche told his story slowly, but said nothing of his intention to arrest DeLaunay as soon as possible. He simply asked Father McManus what was the best thing to do towards helping his son to get back his good name. The work of convincing a man of LaRoche's mental power that a certain course of action ought to be followed is herculean, and the priest did not care to undertake it. He did not think much of Amedée's letters, and was more than doubtful of DeLaunay's guilt.

"There is only one thing for you to do," he said. "Put the case into the hands of a good lawyer, and follow his advice. You have I think hard work before you."

"Why," asked the captain.

"You must get proofs of all that your son alleges. You must prove that DeLaunay stole the three thousand himself, before you can declare Amedée innocent. When you have done that your son's reputation is as bad as ever, for he was caught committing a burglary, he admits that, and the moment DeLaunay hears of your suspicions of him he will drag the boy back and send him to jail for years. You can't prevent that you know. So that you must be very secret, very slow, and get the best lawyer in the county to do everything."

The captain was staggered, but he said defiantly.

"I am goin' to have DeLaunay arrested this morning. I can't afford to pay no lawyer. I'm goin

to let the law do what it can. I guess it will do him some harm anyway."

The priest assented with a gesture, and refused to discuss the matter. It was, he said, too serious a case for anyone to interfere with except lawyers and officers of the law. At this moment the door-bell rang and Hugh Sullivan apparently nettled at being late entered.

"I came upon this business of the captain's," he said to the priest "I suppose I am too late."

"The father," answered LaRoche stubbornly "gives me the same advice that you give. But all the same I'm goin' to 'ave DeLaunay arrested to day. My son 'as been out in Texas fifteen years because of *his* doin's. My ol' woman 'as cried 'er eyes out almost over 'im. Is these things goin' to be done on a poor man by a rich one, an' the rich one to go free an' suffer nothin'?"

"LaRoche is naturally sore on this matter," said the priest to Hugh, "and a little wild. I have advised him to put the case into the hands of a good lawyer. He fears it will cost too much, when it can be done cheaply some other way."

"There is no need of a lawyer," Hugh said quickly. "What we want to find out is if the old books of the firm of Winthrop & DeLaunay are still in existence. These books were said to be so fixed by Amedée that he stole three thousand before he was discovered. The false entries could not have been made by him if he be innocent. They must have been made by DeLaunay himself in the items which he gave to his clerk for copying. I can hunt up these books better than a detective. It will cost nothing, and may do the job for you, captain."

"You ought to accept Mr. Sullivan's help," the priest urged. "It is the only way of saving your son. If you arrest Mr. DeLaunay before these books are found he will destroy them, and then your chances are gone."

"It seems to me," the pilot replied irritably, "you are all on Mr. DeLaunay's side. You're all tryin' to save 'im from what he ought to git."

Hugh took up his hat suddenly and the priest rose.

"I reckon you made a mistake in coming here," said Hugh laughing. "What you want is some one who will advise you to hang yourself because it suits you to be hanged. Good-morning, Father."

LaRoche stolidly followed him out, but his resolution was shaken.

"What do you think of this business," Hugh asked of the priest in an undertone as he was departing.

"Pure nonsense! His son is playing on him."

"Guess I'll have to do what you all say," LaRoche muttered when they had proceeded some distance. "I'll wait while you look for the books."

"No you won't," said Hugh shortly. "If you depend on me to manage the thing for you, you must put the whole case in my charge, give me your word you will say nothing about it to any one, and do just what I tell you from first to last. Don't think I am going into what may prove a nasty business, and leave you to smash the whole shop when you feel like it."

LaRoche glared at him for a moment, then relapsed into thought. His slow mind was a long time getting to the point of view which made Hugh's offer appear advantageous as well as economical.

"All right," he said at length. "I'll do it. I

promise everything. You go ahead and do what you like. You were all agin me, an' if you make mistakes let Amedée blame you. But I don't like to do it."

Hugh was satisfied and very much relieved. He would like to get hold of Amedée's letter as a guaranty of LaRoche's good faith, but to ask it would only rouse his suspicions. He said as they parted:

"To make sure of your word give that letter to your wife, and have her put it under lock and key. Then you won't be tempted to show it to any one."

"I kin keep my word an' the letter, too," said the captain savagely. Hugh felt that he had blundered in hurting LaRoche's pride, but it did not trouble him. It was one of his deficiencies that he could not understand what great effects may result from little things.

CHAPTER VII.

AFTER THE PLAY.

Hugh felt cheerful in having gained a respite for Regina. It was something of a triumph, for the jealous and suspicious nature of LaRoche was difficult to soothe and control. He took care during the week to see him and his good wife often that good dispositions might not weaken. He hardly knew what his next move would be. His aim was to do Regina a service. She was a fine girl, and did not deserve to be included in the disgrace that would fall upon her father. Hugh was not given to studying himself, although not unaware of his own good points in business matters. Therefore he never asked why he took so friendly an interest in the DeLaunays. Had an-

other questioned him he would have answered promptly and truly, 'When a man is in a scrape, and I can help him out I never refuse my help.' Had it been suggested that Miss DeLaunay's charms might explain his readiness he would have laughed and said, "You are right. A fellow likes to help a pretty girl above all things." This was precisely his mental condition now, and his only thought was the scheme which must satisfy both parties. He was sufficiently elated with his success and his hopes to make the next few days very pleasant for his loved Elise and Remi; so pleasant in fact that Mrs. Sullivan said to her daughter in heart broken accents.

"He's gone. He's engaged to her. Worse an' worse! You married a Frinchman, an' he married a Prodestan'. What's the Sullivans comin' to at all, at all."

Mr. Grady heard this complaint also and rejoiced. He first drew up philosophical consolation for Mrs. Sullivan.

"This counthry, ma'am," said he, while the old lady almost transfixed him with her eye, "is already a conglomeration—"

"The Lord save us," under her breath.

"Of divers races, the Frinch, the Germans, the Italians, the Negroes, the Irish and so forth. Now do ye suppose that these people are going to stay Frinch an' German an' Irish all their life?"

"I don't see why they couldn't, Misther Grady. I'm forty years in the counthry an' I'm as Irish to-day as the day I kem into it."

"Is your daughther the same? Isn't she Mrs. La-jeunesse now, ma'am? An' your grandchildren, are they Irish?"

Mrs. Sullivan was dumbfounded for an instant.

"That's the way it s goin' to be all through the counthry," continued Mr. Grady, "they'll mix an' mix until there's nothin' left of the constituent elements but pure American. So I don't see why Hugh shouldn't make up to Miss DeLaunay. She's a Prodestan', that's thrue. But take my word for it if she marries Hugh it 'll be before the priest. Sure DeLaunay himself is a Catholic."

"Well, constitution elements or no constitution elements," said Mrs. Sullivan. "I don't want any more mixin' in mine. I've had too much of it, an' I don't thank any man to put sich notions as you have, Tim Grady, into my son's head. He's bad enough without 'em."

"Oh, I don't put any notions into his head, ma'am, but what's the blessed truth. He's a dacent boy, an' I hope ye ll have him long wid ye. But boys will be boys, ma'am, an' the day comes whin they go away to their own houses, an' lave the old folks to do as God wishes."

Mr. Grady mindful of his own long departed children wiped his eyes. Mrs. Sullivan was softened.

'Thrue for you," she said, "it's nothin' but come an' go wid us all."

Then Mr. Grady departed after advising the old lady on the method of dealing with her children. He took his way to the modest house of LaRoche. It was storming as usual: storm was the normal condition of the winter weather in Saranac. It made the cozy kitchen of Madame LaRoche only the cosier and brighter. The kettle was singing on the stove, there was to be hot punch to night; once in the week Madame al-

lowed the men this pleasure. In the bed-room the table was prepared for a game of draughts or of cards. Such vanities were not tolerated in the room where the altar stood. Tim sat down with a deep sense of comfort. No festivity that the great house might provide for its guests could touch his heart like a quiet game in the bed-room with the kettle singing a coming pleasure in his ears and the storm roaring outside. His authority on all matters was unquestioned in this house. The captain and his wife looked upon him as infallible. Secretly Mr. Grady thought they were right in so regarding him. He had never made a mistake in his life. The world or rather the universe was managed on a theory which he had discovered and made his own. He was conscious of his rare intimacy with Providence, and an adept in explaining the profound language which he used in foretelling Its ways. For like all prophets of this kind he sometimes mixed his facts, only to find later that had his language been properly interpreted it would have fitted the facts. Conscious of his own greatness Mr. Grady was therefore fearless and calm on great occasions, and never hesitated to oppose himself to the whole world.

The three men, for Sol was one of the party, sat down to play at the moment the curtain rose for the first act of Ingomar in DeLaunay's parlors. The punch glasses were regularly filled by Madame who laughed and prayed by turns in the kitchen. Her heart was full of joy to night, although a little heavy with the thought of distant Texas. Mr. Grady had prefaced the game with a dissertation on cards which led to a discussion.

"Maybe you don't know now," said he to Tuttle,

"that cards were invented first to please an ould fool of a king, an' keep him from murdher."

"I had an idee the devil invented 'em," said Sol, whose pledge against all intoxicating liquors was sorely tried this evening.

"He's used thim a great deal," assented Mr. Grady, "which only shows that ould Nick knows a good thing whin he sees it. But I don't care to be talkin' about him. Since the Fall he's been close enough to every soul of us widout wishin' him closer. There's more or less o' the divil in every man nowadays."

"Then he didn't invent 'em?"

"It's hard tellin' what he didn't invint," Mr. Grady replied. "Since the Fall he's had his finger in every pie."

Sol had heard of the Fall and had a physical idea of it, believing that Paradise was situated on a plateau, off which Adam and Eve fell to strike the earth with bruised bodies and softened brains. He had often stated his belief to Mr. Grady.

"It was nat'ral," he thought, "an' to be expected that if the brains of the first man and woman were a *little* soft that their descendants' brains should be somewhat softer. Then when Christ came He hardened 'em agin, for them as believed in Him. An' the more you believed the harder yer brains got to be. An' when they were hard enough to suit Jehovah you died, an' got h'isted back to Paradise. The hull thing sounded reasonable."

"There's only wan thing against it," Mr. Grady said, repressing his scorn, "betther men have given betther reasons for the Fall. The Scriptures don't say that Paradise was on a precipice. When Adam

tell he didn't fall off anything. He fell into sin. St Augustine says, an' he's not to be named in the wan breath wid the Tutttles, that a darkness settled on our minds an' undherstandings, an' our wills got weak, an' we turned away from good sinse. That is why some of us don't know any bettther than to fish for a livin', an' get dhrunk for fun."

"An' play keerds," said Sol composedly, "an' think ourselves better'n our neighbors, an' use big words to cover up bare spots, an' forgit our own sins cos we're so all fired busy a rememberin' otherses."

Here LaRoche found it necessary to interfere and turn the talk into another channel. The captain had been in a peculiar mood the whole evening. He was debating with himself whether he would show to Tim Grady his son's letter. Tim was Amedée's godfather, and had always, to the Captain's irritation, believed in the boy's guilt. LaRoche had believed it himself, but it did not please him to see others of the same faith. It would be worth something to watch Tim Grady reading the letter and to remind him of his harshness to his godson. But his promise to Hugh Sullivan! The Captain had regard for his pledged word. The punch, however, excited him. Madame was seated in a pathetic attitude near the altar, and he called Tim's attention to it.

"Thinkin' of poor, innocent Amedée," he said in a low voice.

Mr. Grady shrugged his shoulders.

"He *was* innocent," said the Captain roughly. This assertion not only conflicted with former assertions of LaRoche, it also attacked Mr. Grady's theory of the management of the universe

"I wish I could believe he was," he said smiling.

"Read that an' believe," cried LaRoche angrily; "it is his last letter to me."

The cards were laid aside while Mr. Grady read with proper slowness the first word and the last, and then examined the postmark.

"You've had it a good bit widout doin' anythin'."

LaRoche, to justify himself, related the incidents of the last few days, but Mr. Grady was not listening. He was examining his utterances for the past fifteen years on Amedée's guilt, and comparing them with the statements in the letter. He saw at once a safe interpretation. The boy had taken *some* money. Mr. Grady had never explicitly stated his belief that he took all. In fact, if his memory served him rightly, he had once expressed a doubt of his taking so large a sum.

"This letter," he said, takes a doubt off my mind that I never could get rid of. I knew that Amedée had taken a little, but I never could make myself believe he stole three thousand dollars."

His companions listened to this in amazement. Mr. Grady folded the letter, put it in his pocket, and went for his hat and stick.

"Where are you a goin' with it?" said the Captain.

"Put an your things," said Tim solemnly, "an' come wid me. The boy's father may forget him, an' wait days an' weeks before doin' what he ought to right him. But his godfather isn't that kind of a man. We're goin' sthraight to DeLaunay's. We're goin' to read this letter to him. Then we'll give him his choice to bring the boy back an' clear him, or stand the consequences"

Sol and the Captain gave a wild hurrah at the strength of this sentiment. With a brief explanation to Madame, the two went out, leaving Sol to await their return.

The orchestra was playing before the last act in the parlors of the great house. The play had been a success, and the Saranac aristocracy were delighted. It was a mild and simple-hearted aristocracy, which admitted all claims for admission to its ranks provided reputation was good. It was not too hard on such members as were naughty. Regina in the simple Greek costume was a real vision of loveliness to them, and Hugh as a ferocious barbarian chief sent thrills of exquisite terror through the ladies. The outcome of the story was awaited with impatience in the last act. The curtain rose. Hugh in a Grecian costume, smooth-faced, bewigged, looked not less handsome than in his skins and armor as chief. Mr. Grady standing with the captain at the door was delighted at his appearance, and angered also. LaRoche, weakening in his purpose on the way up, had told him of the promise to Hugh, and Mr. Grady at once perceived the reason of the young man's behavior. He denounced him unsparingly. He was trying to save DeLaunay at the expense of an innocent man. The audience cast a surprised glance occasionally at the knotty form of Mr. Grady. Hugh saw the pair from the stage, and understood instantly what had happened and what was about to occur. He knew Tim Grady well enough to feel certain there would be a scene as soon as the play was over, perhaps in the very middle of the last act. If that catastrophe were spared, it would be necessary to meet Mr. Grady more

than half way, to hustle him into a private room and keep his mind busy until DeLaunay could be prepared for the scene. Else Hugh was certain Mr. Grady would gather the guests around him and read the letter which was the cause of all this trouble.

The curtain was no sooner down than a servant acting under Hugh's orders ushered the two men into DeLaunay's private study. He had hardly left them when Regina entered in her stage costume to make papa's excuses for delaying them and to charm Mr. Grady out of his senses by her sweet voice and manner. She did not know why she was entertaining him. Hugh had said to her as she was leaving the stage :

"Go straight to your father's study, and entertain the two old men you will find there until your father comes in. There's no time to explain. It is a serious matter. Keep the men with you at all cost."

She obeyed like a soldier.

Hugh followed DeLaunay to his dressing room, and said :

"There's trouble waiting for you down stairs. Get on your togs in a hurry, and I'll tell you all about it."

The elegant gentleman never dressed with less care than on this occasion.

"Captain LaRoche had a letter from his son the other day"—Mr. DeLaunay sat down with a ghastly face—"that gives away your dealings with him fifteen years ago. He charges you with saddling a crime on him. His father is going to have it out with you, and his godfather, a harder man to deal with, is bound to make you pay for it. What are you going to do?"

"Do," gasped the man, "my God, I must get out of here to-night, this very minute. I am lost. The disgrace—it means imprisonment—you can help me—I will take a freight into Montreal—"

Gasping and trembling so that he could hardly walk he tottered to the wardrobe and began to put on his coat. Hugh was at first astonished at this collapse. He found some brandy and gave him a strong dose.

"You can't think of running away," he said, "you must face these people."

"Face them," DeLaunay groaned, "face judge and jury and jail."

His teeth chattered and he continued to struggle with his coat. His eyes looked wild. Hugh gave him another dose of brandy, and then made up his mind to a course of action. He took off the overcoat and pushed DeLaunay into a chair. He understood now that the man was a coward, and could do nothing without the coward's confidence—certainty.

"Tell me," said Hugh, "are the books you doctored when you stole that money destroyed?"

"They are."

"Then how can anyone prove you stole the money?"

"They can't prove it by document," said DeLaunay.

"Didn't you catch young LaRoche robbing the safe on a certain night fifteen years ago?"

"I did."

"Did you believe he was robbing it?"

"No. I knew he was not. I was watching for him to do something of the kind."

"A thorough rascal," thought Hugh. He said aloud in a cheery tone, "You are all right then."

These people can't harm you. They can threaten to show the young man's letter to everyone, but that amounts to nothing "

"That's true," said DeLaunay. The brandy was giving him confidence

"You go down and see these men. Hear their story and their demands. Defy them to prove anything. But offer to restore the son his good name and to set him up in business if they keep still and let you have the letter from Texas. You would not like your family to know of this."

He drew a long breath and paused before answering.

"No I would not. Not for the world. Of course I will see the men, and I will follow your advice. I will get the letter. I will do very handsomely by Amedée. This affair has been a shock to me. I am quite myself again. I shall go down at once."

His recovery was as rapid as his collapse.

"The books are destroyed. There is no way of proving anything. In fact I need not give them a bit of encouragement if I choose. But I can be generous, and I will be."

He went down without thanking Hugh for his aid, and was the same elegant gentleman as ever who greeted the old men politely and thanked his daughter for taking his place. As she was going he said,

"You need not go, if these gentlemen do not object."

"Perhaps if you knew the contents of this letter which I am goin' to read," said Mr. Grady, "you wouldn't care to have annybody but uz around."

In some amazement Regina looked at her father, who smiling signed to her to be seated.

"Very well then," said Mr. Grady, "yer throuble be upon yer own head."

He unfolded his letter and read it from the first word to the last in his hoarse cracked voice, stopping occasionally to throw a look of triumph at Mr. De-Launay. The latter listened calmly, and with an air of interest. His mind went back fifteen years to the night when the scheme for making poor Amedée his scapegoat flashed upon his mind and was carried out successfully within the hour. It had been a lucky scheme for him, but hard upon the poor devil who fled to Texas. Only the fittest survives, thought De-Launay, and he grew calmer as he considered the utter impossibility of proving the charges. He was even angry that so poor an impertinence as this should come up after fifteen years. Mr. Grady finished with a greater sense of importance than if he had been secretary to the general judgment and had just read to the assembled world its many iniquities.

"I suppose the young man wants money," DeLaunay said with a drawl, "but of course you understand that money demanded in this way is blackmail, I—"

"Stop there," shouted Mr. Grady in a passion. "We didn't come here for money, but for justice. We wouldn't touch yer money, such money as yours. But you hear what the b'y says. You know it's the truth, and we want you to understand if you don't bring back that b'y to Saranac, return him his good name, and do something to make up for his banishment to Texas, then you go to jail as sure's my name is Tim Grady."

"Mr. Grady," said DeLaunay, "do I understand that you speak for the father of this young—ah—thief."

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"Papa," said Regina gently, for over the captain's face a pained flush had spread.

"He speaks for me," said LaRoche in a broken voice.

"The courts will decide which is the thief," shouted Mr. Grady tapping the letter. "I know him well enough *now*."

"Let me advise you to burn that foolish letter," DeLaunay said to LaRoche. "It can't do any good to circulate such stories. Even if it were true that I took the money, you can't prove it, for the books are all destroyed. If you show it to anyone let me tell you what I will do. I shall arrest you both for slander, and get damages enough to make you poor for the rest of your lives. If I spared your boy at first I won't spare him now. He goes to jail for burglary the first time I lay hands on him."

"That's enough," said Mr. Grady, "we can go our way an' you can go yours. Come on, LaRoche, tomorrow this letter shall be read in every house in Saranac. The people know enough o' you, DeLaunay, to know thieving isn't beyond you."

The gentleman trembled from head to foot at these words, and changed his position to prevent Regina from noticing it.

"I have been thinking of your boy," he said to the captain, "and had decided for his mother's sake to let him come home to Saranac and to do something for him. You can tell your wife that. But of course if this thing goes on I couldn't think of permitting him to return."

"He'll return this month," said Mr. Grady, "an' no thanks to you. Come on, LaRoche."

They went out into the hall and met Hugh Sullivan bright and smiling as if the world were just made new that night. He expressed great surprise at seeing them and conducted them to the door. The sound of voices from the great parlors reached Mr. Grady's ears and gave him an idea.

"We may as well begin here," he muttered and was starting back when Hugh's hand closed on his arm and placed him in the open air beside the captain.

"Another time will do as well, Mr. Grady," said Hugh.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE PILOT'S BARGAIN.

It was a sorrowful night for Regina. The light of the parlors seemed to have become a glare, and hurt her. The sincere compliments upon her acting gave her no pleasure, but she smiled and thanked her guests mechanically while her mind was busy in studying her altered relationship to her happy past. It was the first time in her life that anything so serious had happened.

Her father, of whose elegance and refinement she had always been proud, had been a thief, and had forced an innocent man to suffer for his crime! It seemed to be with him a mere matter of business, but if he had been caught and punished at that time she would now have been poor and a jail-bird's daughter. A new quantity, crime, had entered into her life, and a much-esteemed one, perfect respectability, had gone out of it. It was like death. The father of her thoughts had gone out of them never to return. In his place was a being that hurt her to look upon and

to speak to, a being which had sinned against her and against the innocent. What a pitiful letter the poor exile had written! How patiently for fifteen years he had borne another's injustice! And, with what brazing impudence her father had spoken of him as a thief!

The guests noticed no change in her manner, which at its best was not over-cordial, but Hugh perceived the suffering she endured. Honesty was with him such a virtue that he could easily enter into her feelings. He had wished to save her from any knowledge of her father's character, and he was angry with DeLaunay for exposing himself to the one creature who surely loved and respected him; for Hugh surmised that Mrs. DeLaunay had no regard for her husband. He tried to comfort her, not seeing that words were small comfort at that moment. She avoided him, because he knew of her father's shame; he who was only a lake sailor belonging to some common Irish family in the town. Very likely he would take advantage of his knowledge to become disgustingly familiar, and perhaps to thrust himself upon her. Indeed he was doing that now, following her with his eyes, and trying to meet her at vantage points in the rooms. All at once she began to hate him, eluded him, received his advances with such coldness that he could not fail to understand her motive. It burst upon him suddenly, and set him laughing. First it was LaRoche, then Grady, now Miss DeLaunay who hated him for his interference. "It's what meddlers deserve anyway," he said, and thereafter gave the poor girl no trouble. He also took the resolution to keep out of the affair for the rest of his days.

Regina's thoughts still worried her, and when she saw that he followed her no longer a sudden fright stirred her. With the people who knew of her father's villainy she ought to be friendly lest they blab his guilt to the world. She looked round at the crowded parlors. How great a change in these people towards her would not a whispered story make. A panic seized her. Sullivan might be making the past known even now, for there was no reason why he should withhold it. She sought him out and spoke to him almost confidentially.

"I had forgotten to thank you. Papa told me of the service you did him this evening." She could not for her life have named the service. "It was so kind of you."

"The kindness was intended pretty much for you," he said. "Then he spoiled it by letting you hear the whole thing. There was no necessity for that. You need not fret over it. It will all be arranged quietly I think."

"I must beg of you not to mention it to anyone—"

"Of course not," he answered in surprise; "why, I have been trying this week past to prevent a whisper of it reaching any others than those interested."

"Will you give me your word," she said earnestly, "never to mention it to any living being?"

"I give you my most solemn word," he answered with deep seriousness, and somehow she felt that no earthly power would ever shake the strength of that promise, even if the Captain *was* nothing more than a lake sailor.

When the guests were gone, and father and daughter had the great rooms to themselves, DeLaunay saw

that she was eager to talk with him, and a fear beset him to be with her alone. What would she say when her thoughts had time to arrange themselves? He was uneasy under her scrutiny. She was trying innocently to understand in the sad light of his crime the new father that had taken the place of the old.

"How did you happen to—" she began.

"Well you see," he interrupted, "it was very ordinary. The same thing happens every day you know, only not such a fuss is made about it. I was short in my accounts some three thousand dollars, and a little speculation I was in failed to wind up at the time I expected. Three weeks afterwards, my dear, I was worth double that amount, worth six thousand. But I was desperate. Winthrop wanted to get me out of the business. If he found out the state of the books it was all up with me. Then this LaRoche happened to rob the safe in the nick of time. I was very fair with him, Regina, as you can see, my dear. I could have sent him to Dannemora prison for years, but I let him go. Afterwards I made ~~the~~ three thousand good. The only real injury done was in making him out a defaulter. He was only a burglar, a common thief."

"He was not even that as you know, father," she said gently, and he answered nervously:

"Well no, of course not; strictly speaking I don't suppose he had any intention of stealing, but if you could persuade a jury of that fact, Regina?"

She raised her hand in deprecation.

"There is no need for humbug between us, father."

"No," he said trembling, "I know it, I am in the wrong. But I am ready to do what is right by him.

He can come back, and I can put him in the way of becoming a rich man."

He did not care to say that Amedée's reputation would be restored to him, nor did she wish him to say it, for such a promise meant exposure; she averted her eyes lest he should take her look as a command. A faint flush stole to her face and receded. Already she was willing to continue the wrong done by her father.

"I wish so many did not know it," she said. "That terrible Grady is one who will never cease to persecute us."

"Oh, I can settle Grady," he answered with a short laugh, "the other man can be bought off somehow. It is this young Sullivan, I don't know anything about him; how did he come to know? But he was very kind you know; came to tell me beforehand; but for that, Regina, I would have fainted before those men, and have surrendered at once. I don't know what his object was. He braced me for the interview. —Yes, even showed me how I had the advantage of the position for the time, so that I was quite cool, you remember. Of course he had an object, and we must be careful of him. If this gets out and reaches Winthrop's ears and your mother"—he paused and trembled—"then we may as well give up everything."

"It must not get out, father. I can manage this Sullivan if you can deal with the others. I don't see why you could not——"

She was going to say "confide in mamma," but checked herself in time, and said, "This Captain Sullivan has promised to keep the matter a profound secret, and I think he is a man of his word."

“So are we all, my dear, men of our word, as long as our interests do not suffer by it.”

They talked for some time longer, and then retired to their own rooms. Regina was tempted to fall into discouragement. She had become all at once a conspirator with her father against justice. There was no doubt in her mind that the reparation due Amedée LaRoche was the restoration of his good name. For his long exile money and encouragement might make some, if not complete, return. She was not prepared for an act which would bring disgrace upon herself; in fact her intention to avoid publicity was firmer than her father's. Therein she knew her self guilty as he. She would not dwell upon the thought, turning her mind to her mother and Hugh Sullivan. It was probable Sullivan had known of the crime for some time, even while attending the rehearsals. She had never spoken to him twice before the play of Ingomar was thought of. What was his motive in betriending her father? He had said frankly that his interference was intended to benefit herself purely. She thought him stupid enough to aspire to her hand, for Saranac youth were noted for the solidity of their conceit, and the vulgar bluntness with which they dashed into matrimony. It gave her a vague satisfaction to know that if such were his motives sooner or later she could punish him.

The relations between her father and mother had always been a mystery to Regina. DeLaunay was afraid of his wife, and submitted politely to the covert and biting sneers she inflicted upon him daily. Her manner often made the girl think that she simply lacked a good reason to fall upon him

and destroy him. As far as temper was concerned Mrs. DeLaunay was a model. She never showed any, but she had the faculty of saying more with glance and gesture than most people with their tongues. Regina admired her father more, because his thorough refinement seemed flawless, while about her mother hung a suspicion of coarseness scarcely hidden by her grand manner. What history had the two which threw so dark and lasting a shadow over their lives? It was useless to speculate on it. What interested her more was that from her mother and from Sullivan danger was to be apprehended. Recalling a happy home she had once seen, it saddened her to see how little happiness her own home offered to its members. With this last thought prompting the willing tears, she slept.

At eight o'clock the next morning before the De Launays had made up their minds to leave comfortable beds Captain LaRoche with his letter was in the parlor to make terms. A few hours of thought had convinced him that Tim Grady's movements were erratic and unprofitable. DeLaunay had the safe side, the law was with him; and the pilot, like every French-Canadian of his class, had a strong respect for the law. His wife agreed eagerly that if the great man let Amedée come home and started him in business it would be best for them all. In vain Tim Grady protested. The pecuniary advantages were not on his side. He had only a shadowy honor to plead for, and little the poor mother cared for that if she but had her son. Moreover LaRoche insisted on secrecy being kept by Tim, which the latter sourly promised on conditions.

"If," said Mr. Grady, impressively, "this rascal DeLaunay—for that's all he is—doesn't do what's square by yez, thin I'll spake whin I plaze. An' if iver I come across the books that he says were burned—"

"Oh, they was burned long ago," said the pilot laughing.

"Providence," replied Mr. Grady, with the air of first assistant to the Creator, "has ways of Its own. How do you or anyone else know where thim books are at the present moment? An' if I find thim—." He could only shake his head in his failure to get fitting words for the tremendous things he would do.

"If you find 'em you'll give 'em to Amedée when he comes back," said La Roche.

"Ay, whin he does," said Tim, bitterly.

Somewhat repentant the pilot called on Hugh, tried to explain matters, and to get his opinion on what he ought to do, but Hugh was good-naturedly inexorable, and refused to have anything to say in the matter. A family affair, he thought, ought to be conducted by the family and its lawyers, it was a principle he had acted on up to the present, and he was sorry that for a few weeks he had forgotten it. So LaRoche, unadvised and uncertain, went alone to DeLaunay and found himself from the first at a disadvantage. The grand house awed him, and he wondered that they could have had the boldness to enter it on such a mission the night previous. It was not possible that the man who owned so much money cou'd once have stooped to steal three thousand dollars. He greeted DeLaunay with profound respect, and reminded him of his remark during their last exciting conversation.

"There's no need o' me sayin' that if I knew you

was intendin' to treat Amedée that way I wouldn't hev thought o' disturbin' ye on no account. If you hev'n't changed yer mind I'd be willin' to throw away the letter, an' say no more about it."

"I am willing that Amedée should come back, LaRoche. But about setting him up in business I don't think I could do that very well. He must have forgotten all about business now, and then it would take considerable money. I might lend him something, or say a good word for him."

The pilot held his son's letter in his hand and his face grew downcast.

"I told the ol' woman you was intendin'——"

"Ah, your wife! Yes, for her sake I might do something. She must have suffered for the last fifteen years with her son absent. A bright boy he was. Too much company spoiled him. He might have been a rich man at this moment."

LaRoche placed the letter in his hands appealing silently for his favor. The great man turned it over indifferently and laid it on the table. He wanted some assurances of good behavior.

"You told too many about this thing, LaRoche. After what I did for your son I had no right to expect it. Now who can say what talking this Grady and this Sullivan may do?"

"Grady won't say nothin', for I'll deny everthin' he says, and Hugh Sullivan says it's agin his principles to meddle with family doin's. No one else knows anythin' about it. You've got the letter an' there's the end on't."

"Very true. Well, I don't mind promising to set Amedée up in business, and to help him along, too,

when he gets home. Shall I write to him, or do you think it would be better for you to do it?"

"If you wouldn't mind," said LaRoche, "it would be a surprise to the boy to git a letter from you."

"No doubt. Well, I'll write the letter, and you can post it with one of your own. Good morning."

The pilot went away delighted, and with a gesture of contempt, DeLaunay threw the letter into the stove. Regina came in as it turned to ashes, and was told of the happy incident.

"It was a moderately tight corner, my dear," said her father placidly, "but I have been in worse ones. I mean that this particular business shall never trouble me again."

Regina wondered if to accomplish this, further dishonesty and cruelty would be necessary.

CHAPTER IX.

QUIET TIMES.

The immediate consequence of LaRoche's surrender to DeLaunay was a breaking-up of all the little anxieties, excitements, relationships which the letter had helped to form. Everyone dropped at once into his usual place, and every mouth was shut so tight, every tell-tale glance so carefully suppressed that to the interested parties the whole affair might well have been a dream. Mr. Tim Grady, however, was fidgetty and quarrelsome. LaRoche was compelled to put a firm hand and a strong word upon him. Hugh Sullivan avoided him always. DeLaunay treated him with contempt. In his extremity he turned to David

Winthrop and put with great caution a hypothetical question. Was it the custom of business firms to destroy their old books and papers? After a certain number of years it was, said Winthrop, and as it took little to make the old man talk about his glorious past he went on to say:

"I never destroyed a book, never, sir. I have 'em all stowed away in a safe. DeLaunay tried to burn some of 'em, and actually gave the order to some man to build a fire under 'em, but I saw to it that the wrong books went into the fire, and I kept the right ones. He believes they were destroyed. I thought I might have caught him napping. I examined the books very carefully. They were all right as far as he was concerned. Young LaRoche had doctored 'em to the tune of three thousand, that was all was wrong with 'em.

Mr. Grady smiled at this emphatic talk, and felt that after all he had the advantage of Hugh Sullivan and DeLaunay, whom he associated since the night Hugh so suddenly transferred him to the street side of the hall door at the grand house. At once his fidgetting ceased. He no longer looked daggers and breathed war in the presence of these gentlemen, and ceased to coin hints and quote proverbs to Madame LaRoche. Peace reigned in Saranac. It was also the season when mud had possession of the town. April had come with strong south winds and generous rain. The snow was firm, deep, brilliant the first week of the month, and did not mind the new heat of the sun. In three days under the rain and the wind it became a sickly thing, shrunken and ugly; in three more it was utterly gone. The frozen earth looked

hideous. The lake rose within its borders, and cracked the honey-combed ice, which the winds seized, and churned and twisted and knocked about until only a fringe of ice fragments lay along the shore of the bay. When the noise of the day had ceased and the slight swell of the lake rose and fell on the shore, these broken pieces striking one another tinkled like the sweetest bells. The music was more ravishing and keen than any which art could produce, and Saranac folk, young and old, turned out to hear it; the old recounting all the pleasant things that had happened since first they heard its exquisite tone, the young finding language for one another that seemed to harmonize with the tinkling sound as softly as did the minor key of the elders. It was the busy time for Saranac. Farmers were preparing for seed time and boatmen for the opening of navigation. Everyone was hard at work and glad that the long winter was over. The talk in the stores and saloons had changed from anecdote and reminiscence to present plans. No longer could anyone be found at home or lounging about the town. Workpeople were out daily in the mud.

In three weeks Hugh had not seen Regina, and had taken particular pains to avoid her father. He was glad to know that the whole matter had come to an end, and gave himself much credit for his share in bringing it about. He was not shy in claiming merit for his own good actions and qualities, having the commercial instinct for values: but at the same time he was too sensible to look for displays of gratitude or admiration from others. It did not seem strange to him therefore that the De

Launays had so suddenly cut off all intercourse with him. He had never associated with them until the rehearsal began, and the play being over he did not see any reason for closer relationship than before. Home matters, too, were interesting just now. Remi and Elise were preparing their catechism earnestly, the boy to make his first communion, the girl to make her first confession and to be enrolled in the scapular. Their excitement had naturally communicated itself to the whole house. Mrs. Sullivan's strictures on the French and their notions were altogether suppressed, that strife might not disturb the pious dispositions of the little ones. She justified her silence by such remarks as "Whin it comes to confession an' communion an' Mass an' Death an sich, Frinchmin an Irish are all wan I don't suppose wan could tell a Frinchman's bones from mine a hundred years from now." She grew so amiable on this point that the children tried her resolution sorely. The mother, sweet and gentle with them always was most concerned with the clothes they were to wear. Hugh was the instructor, taking charge of their progress in the catechism. So from morning till bedtime it was one topic or another connected with the great event of Easter, and Hugh spent most of his time at home with the children. His heart was wrapped up in them as if they were his own. Manlike, he seemed to love the little girl best, her ways were a wonder to him; but the boy was really nearer to him in that he looked upon him as a future comrade. Regina De Launay would have found it hard to believe that any man could so far forget himself in others; John Winthrop would not have believed it at all. It was re-

served for their enlightenment at a time when it most afflicted them.

The cool nights of April were home nights, too chilly for loitering without, nights in which to appreciate warm rooms, well lighted and shining supper-tables, where talk flowed freely on the events of the day. Remi and Elise were the autocrats of Mrs. Sullivan's supper-table.

"Only two weeks more, Elise," said Remi with a teasing glance.

"I don't care if it was only one, do I, Uncle Hugh?"

"Of course not," said he, "what is there to fret about? who would want to find a nicer man than Father McManus."

"There now," said Elise, "do you hear that?"

"Oh, Father McManus is nice enough," said Remi, "he won't eat you. But then it's going in alone to the little box all in the dark, and waiting for the slide to open. My, won't you shake! And then when you have a lot of sins to tell like you have—"

"I haven't as many as you," she said triumphantly.

"Oh, Elise," cried the boy, "didn't we count 'em the other day, and didn't you have twenty-three to my nineteen? Didn't we now?"

"But it's my first confession," said Elise. "I've been saving up my sins for three years, and you've been to confession ever so many times. Hasn't he Uncle Hugh?"

"Certainly, dear."

"But I didn't have any for my first confession," shouted Remi. "When I went in to the priest I couldn't say a word. 'What have you done,' says he. 'Nothing,' says I."

"Better to use 'said he' and 'said I,'" mamma interposed.

"'Well, you're a very good boy,' said he. 'Try and come to confession that way all the time.'"

"But you didn't," taunted Elise.

"I made a good start, didn't I, Uncle Hugh?"

"No, you didn't." "Yes, I did." "No, you didn't."

"That sounds like the katy dids," said grandma

"They keep it up all night, an' somehow or another they don't agree at five o'clock in the mornin' any more than at ten o'clock at night."

"But you'll be afraid all the same," said Remi continuing the teasing process. "You don't know how to make a confession yet."

"I know it perfect now," said Elise.

"Didn't we practice it to day, an' you couldn't tell the first word."

"But I know it all now every word," persisted Elise.

"How did you practice it," said Hugh.

"He was Father McManus and I went to confession to him," said the child.

The three elders exchanged amused glances.

"God grant we may have some kind of a father in the family to give us absolution," muttered the old lady to her plate.

"I am sure," said Uncle Hugh, eager to see this practicing with his own eyes, "Elise knows every word. When supper is over you can try it, and I'll be the judge."

Every one was serious, and the children had no suspicion that there was anything amusing in their seri-

ous play. When they rose from the table Hugh took his paper and sat down to read, while Remi arranged a stool at the back of a chair and sat down to hear the confession of Elise. The pretty child kneeling at the seat of the chair could see as through a screen her confessor's head.

"Now listen, Uncle Hugh," she said. Mrs. Sullivan had fled to the kitchen and Mrs. Lajeunesse was engaged in removing the dishes, but all three were watching a scene which to them was prophetic as well as amusing.

"Father, forgive me for I have sinned," said Elise.

"You didn't make the sign of the cross, said Remi.

"I did, the first thing."

"I saw her," said Uncle Hugh.

Then Elise said the *Confiteor* to the proper pause, stating that it was her first confession—

"You were old enough to have come sooner," said the confessor gravely.

"So were you," Elise responded promptly.

"Is that the way to talk to the priest, Uncle Hugh," said Remi looking over the confessional. "No matter what I say she can't talk back, can she?"

"Of course not. It wouldn't be polite."

"I forgot you were a priest," said Elise gently.

"Go on then," said the confessor, "you are very rude."

Elise was compelled to suppress a giggle.

"Father, I have sinned by etcetera, etcetera, etcetera."

"Tell some real sins, I don't want any etceteras. You don't get absolution for them."

"I'm not going to tell my sins here," said Elise.

"Then I'll tell them for you, you rude girl. Didn't you tell three fibs last week—"

"Here," said Uncle Hugh, "drop that. Go on with the end of the confession, Elise."

Elise finished the confiteor, and said the act of contrition in spite of Remi's noisy protests that he had not given a penance. Then she upset the chair and ran to Uncle Hugh for approval, who kissed her and said no one could possibly surpass her method of going to confession.

"I think," said Mrs. Sullivan, "we might all go to confession, now that we have a young priest in the family. I'm afraid though, Remi, your absolution wouldn't put many souls into heaven."

CHAPTER X.

TIM GRADY IN TEXAS.

If Hugh thought no more of the DeLaunays, Regina had not ceased to think of and to wonder at his disappearance; for it soon became clear that of his own will he had resumed his former attitude towards them. She spoke of it to her father.

"My dear Regina," said he, blandly. "I haven't thought of the fellow twice since that night, and I do not see why you should bother about him. He is very, very common-place, used to black boots or sell papers, or some hideous thing like that, when he was young. Gratitude! Well, I feel grateful to him, but this class of people must be let severely alone. Some day he will want a business favor, I grant it, and our account is squared."

The words hurt her, true as they might be. Granted

that the young man was one to be let severely alone for his troublesome qualities, they were at least beholden to him for services ; but the manner in which her father treated everything and everybody connected with his shame made very evident his pure hatred of all concerned in his exposure. There was no pity in his soul, no sorrow for bitter wrong done. This fact came home to her slowly, and did not, of course, increase her esteem for him.

He had concluded after a little thought that no danger was to be feared from Sullivan, whereas Tim Grady needed constant watching. Hugh behaved precisely as if the late troubles had never taken place, but Grady had become so annoying that if happiness were to be DeLaunay's lot in Saranac the old man had to be reduced to abject servitude. To secure this end Regina's father prepared a little plan, and then sent for Tim.

"Grady," said he, "I have a little business matter to settle with you.—"

"And so have I with you," responded Tim cheerfully.

"Indeed," with surprise, "may I ask what yours might be?"

"You might, an' ye'll get yer answer. I don't want to fight ye in the dark, as you did Amedée LaRoche, but you must know that the books of the firm that ye thought were burnt aren't burnt at all, but are in David Winthrop's hands to be examined any time we wish. An' jist as soon as ye fail to do the square thing bye the b'y in Texas, that minute I'm free to tell Winthrop the whole story an' have him examine the books. Ye can jist imagine how glad

he'll be to do us that service. That's my business, now what is yours."

"You say the books that LaRoche doctored have not been destroyed?" repeated Mr. DeLaunay, slowly, as if every word was worth a million.

"That's just what I say," Grady answered in triumph.

"You gev the ordhers to have 'em desthroyed, but Mr. Winthrop put old wans in their place and kept the books that *you* doctored."

"Oh, don't say that, Grady," said Mr. DeLaunay pleasantly. "You cannot prove such a charge even with the books. Curious action on Winthrop's part, but he was always a suspicious, mean dog. I'm glad you mentioned it. But are you quite certain that the books are still in the hands of Winthrop?"

"I have his own word for it," said Mr. Grady. "He had no reason that I could see for telling a lie, for he didn't know what I was afther'."

"No, of course not."

"O' coorse not," repeated Mr. Grady. "He said that he looked through the books to see if *you* had done anythin' to 'em, but he couldn't find yer thracks. But if I get at them wanst, Mr. DeLaunay, ye may feel sure I'll folly ye up to the last figger."

"I'm sure you will," the gentleman said amiably, and then suavely stated that Amedée LaRoche would soon be back from Texas; he hoped that Mr. Grady, as the godfather of the young man, would not put any foolish notions in his mind about a broken reputation, but would rather do his utmost to prepare him for a useful business career in Saranac, where, with the help of his many friends and financial backing, he

would quickly live down his past reputation. Unfortunately, continued DeLaunay with a sigh, he had just received word from Texas that Amedée had taken to drink, and in consequence the scheme of bringing him back to Saranac presented difficulties; it would be necessary for a trusty person to go to Osborne, and discover the exile's actual condition; he himself would pay all expenses, and he thought Mr. Grady was the proper person to send on this mission. Tim was amazed when the offer was made

"It's the fairest thing ye've done yit," he said, "I am protecting myself," replied DeLaunay, stiffly. "I have promised to bring the man home, and start him in business, but I am not going to throw money in'o the lake. If he has turned out a drunkard I shall do nothing for him, but for his father instead."

Then he placed a roll of bills in Mr. Grady's hands, bade him be secret and expeditious, and expressed the hope that Amedée would be in fit condition to return home under his godfather's care.

"A perfectly safe compliment," he said gleefully to Regina after the old man's departure, "for if I know Mr Grady he will return thoroughly disgusted.

"Unless his godson should not be so bad as reported," she suggested at random.

"Oh! That's a thing to be thought of too," he said startled. "It is the unexpected that has happened in the last few weeks. And I begin to fear, Regina, that we *have* made a mistake in our behavior to young Sullivan. If anything happens he might be of use to us again in taming these wild people?"

"Possibly," she replied coldly. "I have thought of it myself, and if you wish I might call or—"

"I think it would be best, Regina. He's a nasty beggar, but we can't help it, for a little while, you know, until everything is surely settled.

It never occurred to him that his confidences were distasteful to her. The complete exposure he had made of his character to her astonished gaze had made him almost repulsive in her sight, and she would freely have dispensed with his confidences. But his weak nature required something to lean upon. She was his confessor as it were, and had to suffer as confessors usually do, from revelations of moral hideousness. Her elegant father was not only a liar, hypocrite, and coward, but also hard enough in infamy to make little secret of it before his daughter. She bore it patiently. His latest news was indeed a thing to rejoice over! Amedée LeRoche drinking himself to death in Texas! He had become a confirmed drunkard, and it was a matter of a very few months until he died of delirium tremens. He did not see her shudder, so eager was he in explaining his plans.

Tim Grady returned home one month after his departure with a grave face and a sad story. He stayed one day and one night in the town which suffered from the presence of Amedée LaRoche, and to the sorrowful father and Captain Sullivan he told his experiences.

"Whin I kem to Osborne," he said, "they were houldin' a political meetin', an' I had to mek a speech, of course. Well, all the time I was talkin', there was in the aujence a dhrunken fool that kep' mockin' me, an' interruptin' me, an' abusin' me worse than a murderer. I niver in all me life heard such swearin' an' goin' on. Whin we got through, and we wor all

condemned for his former trickery. They could have made it hot for him, only that money was on hand, and he agreed to do the right thing without compulsion. To restore the young fellow to his parents, and set him up in business. Dannemora would hardly be the place for DeLaunay's style.

I hope your little speculation is turning out well. I send you a check for your share of our last venture. The weather is moderating, and the lake is opening. In a week we can begin to paint and mend for spring work. Kind regards.

Your Friend,

HUGH SULLIVAN.

In New York after reading this letter Winthrop pondered over it carefully. The second paragraph might have been omitted, and the letter have read as well. The first paragraph had evidently started a train of thought in Hugh's mind, and unconsciously he had expressed it on paper. The impression made upon him by the prison led him to think of DeLaunay as a convict. So something must have happened at home which was public property by this time, and Hugh had been connected with it. It might have been the discovery of DeLaunay's ill-doing in former days. He had bought off the accusers or the injured and so escaped. That it was public property Winthrop thought from the tone of the second paragraph. He was supposed to know something concerning De Launay which made Hugh's comments intelligible. It surprised him therefore on his return to discover no trace of the event to which the letter alluded. He made the most cautious inquiries, and sounded Hugh many times on the wardenship of the prison. There

was not the slightest rumor of crime, or exposure, or jail in connection with DeLaunay's name.

He studied the letter once more, and then constructed a theory about it. Something had happened in the DeLaunay family, the exposure of a crime which had left DeLaunay open to dangerous accusations. He had bought off his accusers, Hugh was interested on either side, probably on DeLaunay's, and in a thoughtless mood had let slip vaguely the secret. If he were in the family secrets now, he must have been very close to its members during the days of threatened exposure. This thought made Winthrop downhearted, until he saw that Hugh was no longer received at the mansion and was treated with much coldness by Regina. To test the soundness of his theory of the letter he said abruptly to Hugh,

"What is this trouble that you told me of about De Launay running the risk of getting jailed, or something to that effect."

"I never told you or any other lawyer about any trouble in which DeLaunay ran a risk of getting jailed," Hugh answered promptly. "What are you after?"

"It was you or another," said John meditatively. "Didn't you write me a letter while I was in New York last month? And wasn't it then that I heard the news?"

"I wrote you a letter I know. But there was no stuff of that sort in it."

"Where did I hear it, then? Has there been any story to that effect going round?"

"I have heard none," said Hugh cheerfully, and then began to wonder how the late episode had become known. Winthrop was satisfied that his theory of the letter was correct, and that the letter itself was

worth keeping as a specimen of psychological eccentricity. He suspected the secret which it was intended Hugh should keep, having found by dexterous enquiry that nothing was known about such an affair among the people of Saranac. It was characteristic of John Winthrop that he at once dismissed the matter from his mind. He had partially learned a secret through his friend's inadvertence, and he respected it as sincerely as if he were bound by oath. His delicacy of feeling was a strong trait in him. It was all the more curious that his old father had no delicacy to mention, and that the quality was unknown in the district. The first tows had already cleared from Saranac, and in the still cool nights the songs of Canadian boatmen could often be heard on the water at any hour until dawn. The opening of the great waterway of Champlain meant life to Saranac, after the dullness of winter. This year it opened very pleasantly owing to the inventiveness of the captain of the *Adirondack*, which lay in the glory of fresh paint at her dock waiting only the signal to steam away. Her decks were gay with banners and Chinese lanterns, and her salons with green festooning and bright drapery. For Captain Sullivan had arranged to hold the last church festival of the year on the steamer, and to reproduce *Ingomar* in the grand salon as brilliantly as at DeLaunay mansion. In consequence of this scheme Mrs. Sullivan one afternoon had her kitchen stove in full blast baking cake, and her ice cream freezers doing heavy work in the barn with Tim Grady at the crank. Four points of the compass engaged her attention: the cake in the oven, the cream in the barn, the gay steamer in the bay,

and the front bedroom where Remi lay ill attended by his mother. Mrs. Sullivan scolded at them all

"I wouldn't object," she said to Mr Grady, "to all the festivals the church cud have, an' I'd make a thousand cakes for Father McManus every week. But what did they go to puttin' on their divil's plays for? An' why can't they have the thing dacent in the hall instid o' runnin' afther the ship?"

"By gum, ma'am," said Mr. Grady, warmly, "'twas a great idea to take the ship for the festival. The people are comin' from all over to see it as they never kem afore. It's the novelty that draws 'em, an' novelty's the thing."

"Ay, novelty," repeated the old lady with scorn. "Novils an' novelty! The town is full ov 'em. An' when the novelty's all gone, Misther Grady, like molasses out of a barrel, what'll they do thin, I'd like to know."

"What's new to wan is ould to another," he replied. "The young take up what the ould cast away, and call it new. In that way there'll always be novelty. How's the b'y?"

"I was timptin' him wid crame, but he wudn't look at it. I'm afeard he's goin' to be very sick. He was wild to go on the steamer, an' now he won't hear tell of it. Divil o' much he'll miss to see his uncle prancin' around like an Indian, an' makin' mock love to Regina DeLaunay, an' all the other doin's of these theatrical parties wid their paint an' powdher, an' nonsense."

"Well, it'll be a good thing for the church," said Mr. Grady in subdued tones, which statement Mrs. Sullivan could not well deny.

That evening the steamer was in a blaze of light, and the audience was full of country spirit. This is not always agreeable to public persons, and is particularly annoying to the sensitive soul of an amateur actor. For a country audience is unconventional, and does not hesitate to dissent from Shakespeare when the methods of the great man strike the country mind as ridiculous. Hugh could remember how a Saranac crowd laughed when a professional Othello seized the pillow to smother Desdemona. The enraged actor made up with Desdemona on the spot, and both closed the scene with a lively jig. Love-making after the stage fashion, unless very well done, is sure to arouse country mirth. Its methods have never come within country experience, and are very unreal to tell the truth, with their long periods and exaggerated passion. Hugh felt afraid of the love making in *Ingomar*, but he relied on Miss DeLaunay's beauty to carry the scenes well; which it did no doubt, yet there was enough guying from the young men to set the girls giggling. The dainty ways by which the girl from Massilia won the soul of the barbarian made the boys murmur, "oh, would we were thee, Ingomar," and indulge in sounds expressive of loving terror towards nothing in particular. If Hugh had not looked so handsome in his change to a Greek costume there would have been a howl over what was beyond the historical knowledge of the audience. Sol Tuttle was sorely puzzled by it. He took the piece for an Indian play, and when Ingomar appeared in Greek costume with white skin and flowing locks, whispered to Mr. Grady,

"It's not true to natur'; ye can't bleach an Injun no more'n a nigger."

With little incidents like these, an occasional shriek or sob from too interested women, a wreck of scenery now and then, a too open criticism, the play came to an end and everyone was satisfied that they had got the worth of their money so far, with more to come.

The Saranac people had strong appetites for their simple pleasures, and looked for plenty on these occasions. The play began at seven, and the dancing began at nine; and this was the fault of church affairs that they closed at eleven and pleasure seekers must be quietly in bed at twelve, when rather they were quite ready to keep awake until four in the morning. But such doings were not tolerated by the church any more than round dances. The play being ended a continuation of it took place on the floor of the grand salon, when eight of the actors in their Massilian costumes danced the Lanciers under the very eyes of the delighted country people. It was a scene so rich in color that they fairly gaped in awed silence as to the sound of the music Ingomar and the Timarch, old Polydor and Timon, each with a beautiful girl glided through the lively and graceful figures of the dance. It was a piece of condescension on the part of the DeLaunays and John Winthrop to stoop to please the mob; but there is no doubt they enjoyed the respectful worship quite as much as little gods usually do. Captain Sullivan took it as a penance. It was all well enough on the stage, but on the deck of his own steamer to be displaying his shapely limbs in the Greek costume to the people he met with every day it was painful. He endured it for the sake of the priest,

who had requested the pretty exhibition. Such cheering from the pleased people when it was over.

Mrs. Sullivan had, with her own eyes, seen it, and was mixed in her feelings. She had come down to see the ship after the play was over, as she would not attend anything so sinful as a play. She told Father McManus so.

"Then how comes it," said he, "that you let your son act in it, and permit your children to attend it? You must not countenance sin in your own household."

"Well," replied Mrs. Sullivan sourly, "I know I'm in America, not Ireland, an' what's sin over there's respectable here, an' I hould me tongue since it's no use to talk to young people whin the priest himself's in it."

"Mr Grady believes in the play," said Father McManus.

"Sure annythin' that's novelty plases him," she replied with a polite laugh. "What's ould is new nowadays he says, and that's why he is shinin' himself up like ye'd brish an ould tin pan to make it look well."

She was there for one purpose, to discover how her ice cream suited the tastes of the parish and take eloquent vengeance on those who spoke lightly of its flavor or other qualities. So she sat down in the cosy restaurant of the ladies' cabin, and was making a pretence of eating when the dramatic people all came in, were introduced every one by Hugh, surrounded her, and began to eat her ice cream and cake with such warm praise that she fairly blushed. She did not know how Hugh had prepared them for that joke. Miss DeLaunay said very little about it,

chatted in a sensible, kindly way that was far from frivolity. To say that the old lady was gratified would be a weak way of expressing her satisfaction ; to say that she looked down from a lofty height of scorn upon those who came after and found fault with her work would be the correct thing.

It was such a night on the quarter deck that Hugh took the entire troupe to the pilot house. Moreover, he wished to put a question and give a warning to Regina DeLaunay, and he thought the occasion very proper. They stood apart from the others at his request.

"You won't mind my referring to the recent trouble you have had," he said and felt the chill of her manner at once, "but I must ask you, have you mentioned the affair to any others than those who knew it first?"

"Why do you ask?"

"To protect myself. You remember I gave you my word of honor, not to mention the matter—"

"I beg pardon. It was my fault. You were forced to it almost. I led you perhaps to think you should."

"I give you my word again without any compulsion," he said roughly, "for I do not wish to be mixed up in a family affair at all. I should not have interfered anyway, but I really laughed at the affair at the beginning and was anxious only to save those donkeys, Grady and LaRoche, from braying. I mention it now, as I said, to protect myself. John Winthrop knows it."

She was so astonished and scared that she gripped his arm fiercely and gave a low cry.

"Only a few days ago," said Hugh, "he asked me plump what was there in the report of your father being sent to jail, and if I had not told him about it. I denied everything, of course. But it shows that some whisper has reached him, and that he knows I was acquainted with it; he thought to surprise me, for John is a sharp lawyer. I don't think Grady or LaRoche told him, for they would lose money by talking. Yet Grady might. Anyway I don't want you to think for a moment even by accident that I would break my word."

"I could not," she said earnestly.

"So I repeat to you that I shall keep the matter as safe a secret as if I had never heard it. Do not blame me then if it becomes public."

"You have been only too kind. But tell me, do you think there is any danger?"

"From John Winthrop," he said in surprise. "He would die before breathing a word that would reflect on you, or on the meanest thing belonging to you."

They stood silent for a little while, and now that the matter was off his mind Hugh seemed in the mood to talk of pigs and frying-pans. The lovely night had not the slightest effect on him. Miss DeLaunay, completely frightened out of her pride, called his attention to the lake under the light of a late moon and he said it meant muggy weather. The moon hung low in the sky and a single cloud like a gate bar stretched across its face; its light fell only on the distant woods and little patches of water. The great bridge crept over the black water like a huge animal, and its red and green switch lights looked like terrible eyes. The air was soft. The members of the troupe

were talking in low murmurs. It was just the time for quoting poetry. But Captain Sullivan could not talk either philosophy or poetry, and she was disappointed.

"I've seen it so often," he explained, "that it makes me think of going to bed every time I look at it."

The country-people meanwhile had got warmed to their work, and the scenes around were as full of fun as a circus-day. By a gracious whim of Father McManus' the dancing hours were increased thirty minutes. It was now ten o'clock and the merry-makers had still ninety minutes in which to get rid of surplus spirits,—short time indeed for strong constitutions, but what more could be expected from a church affair.

All the parish from the grandfather to the child in arms, from the ditch-digger to the professional man, was there, and much good humor was the result. It can be guessed how carefully managed was the steam-boat festival when Regina DeLaunay and her set did not hesitate to attend. Father McManus was, of course, the centre of interest and dignity. Wherever he moved the eyes of the crowd followed. He patted the children and bought them candy, pinched the cheeks of the babies, ate ice-cream or oysters with the solid men of the congregation. He did this so often that one might have wondered at his staying power—if not acquainted with the facts: He never refused an invitation to refreshment, but a couple of oysters, or a small cup of coffee, or a mouthful of Mrs. Sullivan's cream satisfied him, and enabled him to avoid disasters to his digestion.

With severe and hearty earnestness the young people did double work in the last ninety minutes.

Each set being ended the dancers melted from the floor into the refreshment rooms, and their successors sprang into position on the instant; the music went off like a park of artillery, and the young feet took the measure gaily. Father McManus never tired of watching them. The vast'y polite bowing which followed the uproarious command to salute partners; the first dash forward of the leading couple; the display of individual character in solo dancing; the effect of quickened movement of the final numbers, the occasional confusion, the inspiring rat-tat of the rhythmic feet, the soft laughter, the rush of the last minute, the many sighs of pleasure and pleasant exhaustion, of broken conversation and little shrieks, which marked the stopping of the music, were things to give delight. The country people perspired at their work, and the director, and the musicians; no fun for them in simply moving to the sound of music, they insisted upon exhausting themselves with laughter and activity. They objected to a brief intermission for lunch. Dancing came only once a month and eating was for every day in the year. They besieged the priest for permission to waltz, and he graciously permitted the girls to dance it among themselves. Then the quadrilles were resumed. No music which the musicians could furnish was rapid enough for the eager feet, and the director exhausted his figures to suit the dancers. Right and left flew partners with amazing speed, swinging one another like the turn of a wheel, bowed, skipped, tapped the floor as with drum-sticks, flashed from point to point about the circle and met again. Ribbons and jewelry could not stand the strain, watch-chamrs were trampled

like coal-dust. The last figure was made up of Irish airs, and began with "all hands around." It would have made the stones of Salem dance to madness to hear that music, unsuited, perhaps, for intellectual heads, but sure to take any mortal listener fatally by the heels. The dancers answered to it like racers in the last quarter. Their faces shone with delight, and were regretful too, for was it not the last of this lovely evening? Cruel Father McManus! He made a sign to the director after a whisper to the musicians in the very height of the last minute's enjoyment, and all at once the music stopped, and the musicians fled. There was a general laugh at the confusion.

"It is one minute after half-past eleven," the priest explained. "I wish you all good-night."

It was a proclamation in behalf of law and order. In less than five minutes the steamer was deserted save by its watchmen, and before midnight the village of Saranac was as quiet as if angels lived there.

CHAPTER XII.

A CHANGE OF HEART.

Regina informed her father of the talk with Captain Sullivan on the steamer, and was not surprised at the characteristic meanness of his first words.

"The beggar is getting ready to blackmail us," he said, trembling and paling. "He wants money, he works on our fears for a little and then makes his demand. Ah, that is what he was working for in all this. Maybe too he is in league with the others to make money out of me."

"Perhaps so," she answered wearily. "It does not

look very reasonable though. Time will tell, I suppose. He assured me on his honor—'

"Honor!" sneered Mr. DeLaunay, in a fine tone—

"That he had said nothing about it to anyone, and never would. He thought Grady might have been dealing with Mr. Winthrop, and made a bargain with him."

"If Winthrop gets hold of it we shall know very soon who dealt with him. If it were only a question of money I would not care. Regina, this Sullivan is dangerous. You must look after him, tame him, find out if he wants money, or what he wants. He is a sneak. I hated him from the start. But I—we have neglected him. You and I must cultivate him. Call on him, and invite him here. I feel if we can keep him friendly there will be no trouble in saving ourselves."

"Very well," she replied, coldly. "I have an excuse to call on his sister to day, and I will try to do what I can. But, really, I do not think you need fear him." He looked at her for a moment curiously.

"You see," he said, "I have no faith in what is called a man's honor. You were always foolish on that point, weren't you, Regina?"

"Until lately," she answered with much composure, and a laugh really good-humored.

"Don't bite me," said her father playfully. He minded her bitter speeches no more than this.

She called on Mrs. Lajeunesse that day only to find Remi much better, and also very eager to get well. Because in a week's time the boys of his age were to make their first communion, and the mere thought of being in bed on that occasion had fairly banished the fever and given the lad his normal spirits again.

"How very lucky," said Miss DeLaunay in her coaxing voice, "to get well so quickly "

"Oh, there was no luck in it," said Remi confidently. "I just prayed to Saint Anthony and it came through him. When I want anything, really and truly, he is my saint. He's not as slow as grandma's Saint Patrick."

"My dear," said mamma, "Miss DeLaunay does not understand your talk about saints."

"I was in St. Anthony's city," the young lady said, "and saw his rooms and churches and many relics of him. He was a wonderful man."

"Here's Uncle Hugh," said Remi suddenly, and his face lighted up so radiantly that Regina could not help saying,

"He seems to think so much of his uncle."

"He has every reason," answered the mother gently. "No father could be more to my children than Hugh. He is wrapped up in them."

Miss DeLaunay could see that after the captain had greeted her and sat down at the bedside. The boy was in love with his uncle, while every glance and caress of the young man had a father's tenderness in it, and admiration too; for he did not fail to declare in his ready, frank way that he thought Remi a wonderful boy. It was a prevailing opinion in the household. Miss Regina was well satisfied with a knowledge of his virtues before she left the house, and received a pressing invitation to attend the church on the day of his First Communion. Of course she accepted graciously, just as she had taken a second plate of cream at the festival, to please Mrs. Sullivan. It touched her to see Captain Sullivan's love for his

nephew, it was so womanlike in its nature, and yet so manlike in its restrained expression. She felt that a wrong had been done the captain both by her father and herself, and that some atonement was his due. She was satisfied that Hugh's motives had not only been honorable in his interference of late, but also chivalrous; that he had worked sincerely to save her father from disgrace with no other motive than that of assisting the unfortunate. His whole conduct showed it. Of course there might be the deepest craft in his behavior. But she did not think a man who talked of pigs and pans in a parlor was really capable of craft so extraordinary. A blackmailer! A secret suitor! Still the thought that she was inexperienced and easily deceived determined her not to gush in her intercourse with the Sullivans. If, as she believed, Hugh Sullivan had acted from the purest motives there was time after a long acquaintance to show proper gratitude. For the present a little interest in Mrs. Lajeunesse, Remi, and the old lady's cream would do.

The children went on retreat together a few days before the Easter communion. When Regina called on Friday she met the two in the garden walking up and down in silence.

"Good-morning," she said sweetly. They looked up at the sky, fingers to lips, half smiling, and paid no attention to her greeting. Mrs. Lajeunesse admitting her explained, also smiling, that the rule of a retreat was silence, and the children were carrying out the rule literally.

"We've turned ourselves into a deaf'n dumb hospittle," said Mrs. Sullivan in good humor, "an' the but paid her the compliment of a second plate, and

only consolation in it is that the Frinch is gone wid the English."

"I am beginning to feel a real interest in this festival," said Regina. "What a change in those pretty children, and what curious ways of teaching them religious lessons."

"I suppose," said Mrs. Sullivan with polite curiosity, "ye had somethin' o' the same thing whin ye wor young yerself."

"No silence, no retreat, no walking in the garden praying," said Regina lightly. "I always found it hard to say my night-prayers. Sometimes I think I have no faith in prayer, I do so little of it."

"O' coorse iv that's yer thrainin' that's tne way ye have a right to feel, Miss DeLaunay. But it's mighty poor feelin' to die on I shud think."

Preparation caused universal excitement in spite of the rules of the retreat. Remi had a new suit, new hat, new gloves and shoes, and Mrs. Sullivan had consented to appear in a new dress, bonnet and shawl for the first time in years. Then the white sash which the boy was to wear was not of a width to suit her large taste, its narrowness resulted in one dispute with her daughter, while another followed, in whispers of course, as to whether the sash should cross the right shoulder or the left. It was like walking among eggs Saturday evening after the children had come home from confession, for Remi was so determined to keep from committing a single fault until bed time that if his grandmother spoke a word or made an unusual movement his eyes rolled at her as at one who had committed a sin. She was glad when his mother finally lodged him in bed, and she had leisure

to drape herself in her new garments "to get the hang o' them before the morrow." The excitement was not diminished when Remi woke up at eleven o'clock with a parched throat and a cry for water, shedding copious tears lest it was after twelve, and he had broken his fast in drinking. They had to show him the clock before he could rest in comfort. Then there was peace until daylight.

The April day was charming in Saranac, a real first communion day, not too cold, clear as crystal, and the dry, hard earth full of promise of spring. The blue lake and its misty shores looked unutterably lovely in the morning sun. The shabby streets were lighted up by groups of people in their best attire, and each group surrounded a boy in a white sash or a girl in a wreath and veil and white dress, as beautiful to look at as an angel might be. Regina thought so, and her thought was already expressed in the faces of the people. Among the dignified members of the procession that lined the street to the church, none so dignified as Mr. Tim Grady, who could scarcely believe his two eyes when he saw the Sullivans riding to Mass in DeLaunay's carriage. He was walking at the head of a group, in which were Captain LaRoche and his wife, and discoursing on theology fluently. Regina would have turned her face away when she saw him, but that the sorrowful, lovely face of Mrs. LaRoche attracted her when she recognized the captain.

"Tell me," she said to Mrs. Lajeunesse, "is that woman, the tall one with the very sad face, the wife of Captain LaRoche?"

"God help her," answered Mrs. Sullivan, "it is.

She carries the sad heart to-day, the crayther, thinkin' o' the b'y that made his first communion nearly twen'y-five years ago, an' threw grace an' all away for money an' gamblin' an' drinkin'. I remimber as well as I do this minute the day she took him to the church jist as well as we're takin' Remi; an' ye may be sure she thinks of it too, when she sees the childher dhressed up so nice for their first communion."

A troubled, frightened look came into the face of Remi's mother, and Regina grew all at once gloomy. Her father had atoned with money for the mischief he had done, but what money could heal the wound in this woman's heart or restore her son.

"All she prays for now," continued Mrs. Sullivan, "is that he may come home to die wid the priest an' be buried in consecrated ground. I often heard her say she'd be happy as a bride iv his body were lyin' in consecrated ground."

"Mother," said Mrs. Lajeunesse trembling, "don't talk of those things on a morning like this."

"The Cross o' Christ be about us," cried the old lady, "but I clane forgot meself. I declare I ought to be sthruck dumb on these occasions."

Regina took one long earnest look at the face of Ame-Jée's mother before the carriage passed, and felt its lines of sorrow burn into her mind with a sense of physical pain.

"I suppose," she whispered to Mrs. Sullivan as they left the carriage, "the poor woman prays for her son."

Mrs. Sullivan answered with a gesture.

"Do you think her prayers will be answered?"

"As sure as you an' I, Miss DeLaunay, are standin'

here, Amedée LaRoche'll be buried in that cimmitary," declared the old lady with such emphasis that a load was lifted off Regina's heart. Mr. John Winthrop himself assisted them to alight from the carriage, and brought Regina to the seat he had secured for her father and mother. This pew was the centre of attraction for curious eyes that morning. Many were surprised to see Mr. DeLaunay genuflect and bless himself, but the smile that his wife smiled at these motions of habit they could not see because the lady did not permit it to appear on the surface. The church was clean but dingy. The plaster was broken here and there, the stoves were woeful to look at, and the altar was a flimsy and miserable affair. Regina noted these things when her eyes were not wandering to the pew where Amedée's mother sat eyeing the happy children with a feeling that Miss DeLaunay knew was in the poor mother's heart.

Her father almost dozed, her mother looked bored, and John Winthrop kept up a running fire of comments which spoiled everything. He did not like the singing, or the sermon, the standing up or the sitting down, the priest or his people; and he kept telling these things to Regina in a comical way until the spirit of the scene had left her. The parish priest was not a good talker, and his sermon was tiresome; so was the singing. But the children were lovely, and their innocent devotion would charm the hardest. Regina felt the reverence of the people at the august moments of the Mass. The hush was thrilling. When the little white-clothed children took their places at the altar-rail every neck was craned to get a better look, and many an eye was moistened. Remi among his

rougher companions looked angelic. His uncle and John Winthrop looked at him with interest, and their faces turned profile together gave Regina a chance to study them at the same moment. The study was a revelation. The fine cultured features of the lawyer were disfigured by an expression of cold pity for superstition; the ruddier, plumper face of the captain seemed transfigured by feeling. In this instance the less noble face had evidently the nobler heart!

After the children had received the communion the elders went up to the holy table, and among them were the Sullivans. The expression of pity on Winthrop's face turned to curiosity on seeing Hugh leave his seat to take part in the ceremony; then he seemed amused at the gravity of Hugh's manner, and looked at his nails awkwardly for a while. He could not be cynical here for he knew his friend's sincerity; he only looked puzzled, and soon became cynical again.

"Papa," whispered Regina, when the singing began, "the woman in black just ahead of you in the other aisle is Amedée's mother."

Mr. DeLunay looked languidly in that direction, and saw the poor mother pull her veil over a face streaming with tears while she hurried from the church to prevent the sobs that struggled for loud utterance. Regina's face was expressive as she met father's gaze.

"She had fourteen children," he whispered with a smile. "I wish this affair would end."

It was ending almost at that moment, but he was not familiar enough with ceremonies he still believed in to know that. His daughter felt the pleasure of witnessing such a scene damped by the sorrow of a

bereft mother, the heartlessness of her father and the indifference of the others. What a contrast they were to the Sullivans and the simple people about them! In all her relations with her friends and neighbors she had never passed through a single scene where human emotions were so fully and nobly moved to spiritual things. It might be superstition, folly, witchcraft. If so, what a pity that the ways of evil should have beauties that the ways of truth had not! Feeling this sentiment she expressed it to Winthrop and the captain as they stood by her carriage after all was over. She expressed it vigorously, noticing that the lawyer looked tired and the boatman pale but exalted.

"Millinery and tears in equal proportions affect any woman," sneered the lawyer.

"It was oursincerity that affected Miss DeLaunay," was the Captain's serious answer.

These two answers set her thinking more deeply than ever, and her look as she drove away made poor Winthrop heart-sick.

CHAPTER XIII.

WINTHROP'S TEMPTATION.

John Winthrop's heart was so wholly in Regina's keeping that he had made up his mind to be her husband one day or cease to live. He was therefore greatly relieved when navigation opened for the passenger steamers and Captain Hugh one fine evening sailed away. For thirty-six hours the Captain would be out of Saranac, and out of temptation; and

the impression which he had made on Regina might weaken. Winthrop was still more pleased when the necessities of business and the ordinary accidents of life kept the lady and the sailor from meeting for a whole month. Had he paid attention to the fact that Elise and Remi visited Miss DeLaunay every week he would have been concerned; or had he seen her every other morning at dawn watching the *Adirondack* as it appeared around Iron Point and swept up to the dock he would surely have despaired. The children told Regina more about the captain than she could have learned herself from older people. She liked to talk about him. She was building up in her soul an image of the plain, blunt fellow as he really was, and she was in admiration of it. It was easy for her to rise in the sunny morning and watch the steamer sailing out of the sun as it were into the harbor. Its noble outlines and movement pleased the eye; when she thought of the guiding mind within it the thought stirred her heart. All night the Captain was at his post guiding the ship through the lake channels. It was really he rather than the ship who came so proudly and nobly into port. She said to herself her interest arose from the fact that Captain Hugh was so different from the men about her. She thought of her father and sighed; and remembered Winthrop's sneering face in the church and sighed again. If Winthrop could have seen and known!

After a time he did see enough to disturb him severely. In every visit he made her he noticed that his dear girl, if it was evening, went out on the veranda to see the Captain's ship sail down the bay, and once Mrs DeLaunay said,

"Regina's devotion to that boat is fervid ; she never misses a sight of it."

But in Saranac every one had the same devotion.

"You should see it in the morning," he began, and Regina interrupted him to say

"I do see it in the morning, if I am awake," and he was actually suspicious enough to watch her window for a week after to satisfy himself that she awoke for this event. Next he discovered the visits and talks of the children, and his soul was filled with gloom.

A certainty unfavorable to our hopes is more endurable than the state of doubt, but doubt has also its compensations. Winthrop could not see them. He longed to end his miserable swaying between joy and despair, but as Miss DeLaunay had never encouraged him to woo her he dared not risk all on an ill-prepared proposal. Still the situation looked black for him. When Hugh's name was mentioned in Regina's presence a light came into her eyes that alarmed him. It would seem there was an understanding between them.

He had no confidant to help him bear his misery and give him comfort. His father he did not treat very kindly in his confidences, as he gave him only those which concerned the worst side of his character ; and the old gentleman shrank from them, much as he loved his boy. John loved his father somewhat. But the elder's business capacity being destroyed by sickness, the other elements of his character were not very pleasing. He suffered from John's ill-humor particularly, because through it he sometimes discovered the cause of the young man's trouble. In these

trying days young Winthrop's gloom cast a gloom over their bachelor household.

"What's the matter, John?" said the father tenderly.

"Same old trouble," said John, "girl."

"You know my feelings on that particular girl," said the senior.

"And you know mine," significantly.

"I should think I did. What's the matter now?"

"Doubt. Not certain but another fellow is taking the lead. You look as if you would like that to happen," and John glared at his father.

"Not under the circumstances," and the old man grew a shade paler. "I pray for your success."

"Good, dad," said John, surprised into a laugh, "I didn't know you had begun to be pious."

"Well, I have. Sickness, I suppose, has won me, and then I see no help anywhere. When a man's enemy is sporting his hard-earned money under his very eyes unpunished, and when a man's own son says he will commit suicide if a certain girl rejects him, and there is no way to help or prevent or right these things, what can he do but pray to One that rules all things to help him out of his danger? I know you're in earnest, John, and though I don't like the family, I'd sooner you'd marry every soul in it than lose you before my time. So I'm praying for you."

"Dad, you're too good," said John squeezing his father's hand. "I know I distress you with such talk, but I can't help it. When I think of losing that dear girl a blackness comes over me that makes death seem a trifle compared with it. I've been in the dumps before, and I'll get out of these all right."

Nothing serious has happened. It's only suspicion. You keep on praying I don't believe in it, but I like to know you are doing your best for me, as you always did."

Life, career, happiness hung in the balance with Regina's love. This was so true that he often grew suddenly weak and sick and cast himself in anguish on the ground; he saw it all, the horrid ending, his father's misery, and perhaps that eternity of punishment in which he should wander desolate of her. He carried in his pocket a letter which he was tempted to tear into pieces and cast from him forever. He would read it over and over, threaten it, return it to his pocket.

It was Hugh's letter with the reference to De-Launay's crime. For destroying an ideal it would be the engine. Regina's trust in the man who had promised her secrecy and violated the promise would not hold a minute after reading that letter. But he could not commit this crime against the comrade of his heart. His nature, honorable to the finest sense of honor, turned against it. Hugh and he had gone through blood together, and since childhood had been bound by the closest ties. He knew the revelation in the letter was an unconscious slip of the mind. The missive ought to be destroyed, and the temptation forever removed, but he had not the strength to destroy it. He put it back always with the uncomfortable feeling that he was keeping it, as he had kept it all these months, to use against his friend. But he assured himself that death would be an easier and pleasanter fate than dishonor, and he said aloud that the lake would receive his living body before his hand

lent itself to such a deed. The utterance of so noble a sentiment usually quieted his conscience, and made him good-tempered and hopeful for some days.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE STEAMER'S FATE.

The dock at Whitehall, where Captain Sullivan moored his steamer every other day was a bright place on a summer evening. Miss DeLaunay liked it better than the sights in Saratoga. On her return from a few weeks' visit to the Springs she told the captain of her liking, and was at once seated where the scene of bustle and excitement could be studied at leisure. The night was dark and cool, and the lamps shone all the better for it. The big steamer lay at her mooring like a captive ghost, while the dock was the source of noise and uproar. Mr DeLaunay thought it was tiresome and was for going to bed, until Regina had interested him by pointing out the curious things that delighted her amid the confusion. Then he became interested himself, and wondered how the deuce she could discover them.

A tramp hung around the freight gangway and talked at odd times with the men. His rags drew a laugh from DeLaunay for their oddity. He carried the rags with dignity, Regina thought, and with more manliness and more independence than tramps had usually. His face seemed dark and savage from a distance, probably because his wide-rimmed ragged hat shaded it too much.

"What do you think about him?" said Mr. DeLaunay wishing to be amused.

Nothing serious has happened. It's only suspicion. You keep on praying I don't believe in it, but I like to know you are doing your best for me, as you always did."

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"What do you think about him?" said Mr. DeLaunay wishing to be amused.

"He is a stranger in this place," she replied, "his rags are an accident. He is not afraid of anything. He is *a man*. But some trouble agitates him. He is on the dock for a purpose, and thinks he may not accomplish it."

"No doubt he drinks," said the father sorrowfully, for Regina's admiration *for a man* made him feel uncomfortable.

"That may be his trouble. Do you know him, Captain?"

Hugh had come up for a moment to assure himself of her comfort.

"A common tramp," he replied, "anxious to steal his way up the lake. Probably stole it down last night or last week."

Her father laughed, Regina shook her head.

"He is not a tramp of these parts," she said, "and there is something notable, peculiar about him."

Hugh bent over the rail and took a closer look.

"I think you are right," he said. "He is a stranger and something above the common. If he wants a ride I'll give it to him."

"How generous!"

"Your interest in him has paid his fare," said the gallant Captain with a bow, and he went away laughing at her evident surprise.

"In the name of all that's chivalrous where did he get that bow? Is not this the converser on pigs and frying pans?"

"I suppose," said Regina, "he is playing a well-rehearsed part as he played *Ingomar*. Then he is at home on the water you know, and all sailors are po-

lite on their own element. But please observe our tramp. Good fortune has reached him."

Hugh had addressed the man, who listened to the Captain's remarks pleased but not cringing. Then he bowed in a way that again astonished DeLaunay, came towards the boat with Sullivan, and stood for a minute hat in hand while the Captain spoke to a deck official. His weather-tanned face, thin and severe in feature, was worth a study. Dissipation had exhausted it, but a dare-devil nature was quite visible in every line. Even DeLaunay was able to form an opinion on it.

"A rough, bad life has ruined him," he said, "and he won't last long. But what a devil he must have been in his day."

"You mean, what a man he must have been!" said Regina; and her clear tones reached the tramp. He looked up, smiled, bowed as if admitting the truth of the remark; then a deck-hand took charge and bore him away.

"He believes you," said DeLaunay. "More bowing. Etiquette from tramps! Chivalry from boatmen! Save us!"

The big boat glided from the dock, and away through the south hills into the lake. The lovely shores around were sparsely settled by lake gypsies and the lights from their low cabins twinkled in the night. The dark hills were visible where their rough tops showed against the sky. The stillness of that beautiful region was disturbed only by the panting of the steamer and the churning of the water under the paddle-wheels. It was like moving through a land of mystery in charge of a powerful spirit.

When the boat swung into a landing Regina saw in miniature the scenes of the dock at Whitehall, the deck hands rushing about in the glare of the lamps, nervous travellers, and lazy sight-seers. These landings were numerous, and being on both shores gave the steamer a zig zag course. There was an ever shifting horizon of mountains, of shores dotted at random with the lights of remote villages.

The scene became more impressive when Captain Sullivan took them to the wheel house, where the chief pilot and his assistant guided the vessel in the open lake. The hurricane deck was in darkness, and the lake with its shores lay distinct to the eye, the smooth waters like a map at their feet. The old pilot told her lake stories, and permitted her to hold the wheel spokes and help change the course of the ship. What a thrill moved her as she felt the great panting creature turn so gently under her weak hand!

"You have seen the prince of Champlain pilots," said Hugh later, "a reputation which secures him a position for life. He must have assistants and an attendant. He has become a morphine eater in a mild way. Since he made this fact known the company gave him an attendant, another pilot who never leaves him an instant while he is at the wheel. The old fellow wanted to resign."

"That was honest of him," said Regina, "and clever of the company to retain him."

"He is worth thousands to them," said the Captain. "He has never made a blunder that cost them anything. Even his morphine habit has never yet interfered with his duties and his skill. But of course it may sometime."

"It surely will," said DeLaunay, "and I am glad the company takes proper measures to prevent accident."

Captain Sullivan showed the father and daughter every courtesy. His attentions were numerous and without awkwardness. He knew just what to do, and did it like a master. His uniformed figure looked majestic to Regina in her present gentle temper. His manner towards the passengers was as suave and even as that of a beau. She was certain he said nothing of pigs and frying-pans in his conversation with them, nor did he bring up these vulgar figures once in his chatting with her. The official was a less faulty person than the private citizen. Being much given to comparison of late she could not help contrasting the two men who sat with her. Her father's elegance of manner was no match for the flexibility and youth of the Captain. It looked effeminate beside that dignity which perfect health, a fine uniform, the consciousness of authority and heavy responsibility gave the chief officer.

To be a commanding man was much, and all her impressions of months back concerning Hugh Sullivan came to her soul at once like the tones of a perfect chord, and roused her to admiration. His blunt honest manner, his admirable acting, the love of his relatives for him, his religious feeling, the honest services he had rendered her father, his unconscious humility under her cruel indifference to these services, the tender love for his sister's children; these things stirred her heart deeply because she was now looking at him clothed with power, and wearing it with the courage and sobriety that distinguish men capable to rule.

Beside him not only her father but all the men she had ever known seemed insignificant. John Winthrop, soldier though he had been, was no exception. Alas for John! He came aboard at one obscure landing, conscious that fate had tricked him in delaying the train which would have given him the steamer at Whitehall. The fascination of a uniform, the magnetism of a handsome chief officer, and four hours' time were fatal influences against him; but confiding in the power of night, stars, lake and clouded shore to move the sentimental soul, he set himself to use them. He talked to the DeLaunays quite skilfully, until Regina felt warm and enthusiastic at his clever expression of the feelings the night journey had waked in her own heart. His appearance would not have pleased her earlier in the evening, as it might have spoiled her contemplation of the Captain's good qualities; when this contemplation was ended by sleepiness, Winthrop's lively talk and delicate sentiment were very agreeable. What mortification for him did he know his efforts were so lightly considered; what despair had he seen her mentally comparing him with the Captain to Sullivan's increased glory. In the Captain, Regina concluded, there was less sentiment, more action. Then, in spite of John's sentimental charms, she went to bed and slept.

Some one else also slept that evening to the detriment of the steamship corporation. At two o'clock of the morning the Captain met the pilot's attendant on his way to the wheelhouse, which he had left for a minute after the steamer touched at Westport. This was a breach of rules since his orders were not to leave the pilot for an instant. The Captain sharply reproved him,

"The old man has no morphine in him to night," said the attendant, "he told me so. I have been away only a minute. I left him as wide awake as you are."

"No excuse," said the Captain sharply. "Never let this occur again."

Perhaps he was thinking of Regina's presence on board. He had hardly spoken the word when some thing curious and inexplicable happened. The deck slanted gently so that the Captain thought for an instant that it was caving in aft, the speed suddenly fell off, then ceased, the steamer tilted slightly to larboard, and a light crash was heard forward. That was all. There was no disturbance, and but for the slant of the deck and the stoppage no one could suspect danger. At the first pitch of the vessel the two officers sprang to the upper deck. One glance made plain the disaster and relieved their worst fears. The *Adirondack* was ashore on a slanting rock bottom and by the rarest of good fortune had tilted gently in the right direction. Her side rested solidly and safely against the rock wall of the precipitous shore, while the bow had mounted a low ridge and of its own weight fallen on the other side. This was the crash heard. In the wheelhouse stood the pilot sound asleep, a morphine sleep, with the spokes of the wheel in his hands, motionless, unconscious.

The next instant found Hugh speeding to the engine room. The engine had been stopped. On his way he met two figures in the deserted salon, Regina and Winthrop, pale and wondering.

"We are ashore," said the Captain.

"My God," cried John with a look of anguish to-

wards Regina, "let us wake the people"—and he would have raised a shout of alarm, but that the Captain clapped his hand to his mouth and said in a whisper:

"Not a word for your life. There is no danger. Keep your head, John, and get Miss DeLaunay ready to go ashore. I'll 'tend to the others."

His coolness and decision were magnificent to Regina, and his strong will brought Winthrop to himself at once. The third instant found Hugh in the engine-room whence the engineer had fled; the fourth saw him at the furnace and the tramp beside him. The entire watch had followed the engineer in a cowardly flight to shore.

Fortunately the fires were undisturbed, and a few minute's work with the aid of the tramp shut off danger from them. Leaving the useful fellow on guard he returned to the deck. The pilot's attendant was standing with Winthrop and Regina.

"Help these two ashore," said the Captain, "and then come back to look after the rest. You can step from the deck to the rocks I think."

"Easily," said the pale attendant. "She is stuck fast on a ledge."

"My father," said Regina.

"There is not the slightest fear," Hugh said with a smile, she had shown such a calm courage. "I shall bring him to you without disturbing his nerves."

When they had gone he proceeded to wake his officers and instruct them. Very quietly the passengers were aroused, and informed that the journey had come to an end. Very sourly and leisurely they dressed and straggled into the salon, where the officers

were waiting ; they were led quietly to the deck and handed ashore over the regular gangplank, too mystified by the darkness, broken sleep, and sour tempers to understand the position. The rocky slope, pine and spruce trees all around, and the broken bow of the steamer in a heap on the shore explained that this was not the dock at Saranac. Surprised questions were cut short by a speech from the captain, a brief description of the accident, and a statement that a messenger had been sent for a rescue steamer; while they waited a small cabin near by was at the disposal of the women, the men to shift as they best could. Under the lead of the first officer the confused travellers made through the pine grove to the cabin. It was the shabby hut of a cross fisherman, whose absence for twelve hours had been bought by the captain. The women took possession cheerfully, the men went off to inspect the steamer, the tramp and the first officer were detailed to guard the hut. Regina was pleased to see that her tramp bore a close inspection well. His thin, feverish face had marks of sorrow as well as dissipation. It was a good face in the main, and his eyes were pathetic. He arranged the cabin in a handy manner, seeming to know where necessary things should be in a bachelor's hut; made a fire on the wide hearth, brought crockery, tinware and eatables from the wrecked steamer, cooked the coffee, eggs and toast, and served a neat and refreshing meal to eight or ten nervous women. His rags were gone. Some one had given him enough clothing to take away the tramp appearance.

Winthrop brought Regina a report of the situation after the meal was over. The great steamer

was firmly stuck in its upright position, but for ever useless, and Hugh was actually shedding tears over it. The men had returned to their staterooms to sleep the night out. Probably by noon the next day a steamer would arrive from Burlington to take them home. Revived by hot coffee and toast, the women chattered their grief, joy, wonder in one breath to John, but Regina said nothing. There was something strange about her, Winthrop's loving eyes noticed; something inexplicable and beautiful. He did not like it and felt worried. The tramp and the first officer suggested that a little sleep would save the ladies from headaches that day and give them an appetite for breakfast; at the bare mention of it they banished the men and went to bed on the floor with elaborate preparations. But Regina could not sleep, and took the one easy chair into the small porch over the doorway, where the three men sat at her feet and talked in murmurs of the shipwreck and the luck of the escaped passengers. Two men had disappeared, the engineer and the unfortunate pilot, who were probably wandering in shame and sorrow through the wilderness. Regina listened, watching the east shore where the first dawn would appear, and Winthrop talked with his eyes fastened on her face, studying that new strange expression which so puzzled him. The ship's lantern gave but a feeble light, and sometimes her head was bowed; yet he knew the expression would be there when her face came out of the shadow again. Presently she fell asleep so quietly that he alone noticed. He was sitting at her feet, and rose to a stand-

ing position as if for greater ease. It was to watch her more closely. The men talked, Regina slept, and the slow minutes crept on. Her lips moved once, a smile parted them, and a single word was breathed into his ear.

“Hugh!”

Then there was quiet again, and the talk of the two men continued; but the utterance of that name, the tenderness of the tone, had hurt him like a mortal wound. No matter what he thought, what conclusions he reached, they are easily comprehended; a sudden temptation seized him and he walked away to the lake shore, which was here a precipice, and debated if he would throw himself headlong into the water, or hand to Regina the fatal letter lying against his heart. To die was nothing; to live dishonored was dreadful. He could drown himself; could he betray his friend? It took fifteen minutes to settle this practical question in favor of his own life. There was nothing morbid in the reasoning which led to his decision, nothing dramatic. Winthrop's honor was most sensitive; to do a mean thing seemed for him impossible; to betray his bosom friend, to make him appear despicable in Regina's eyes was an alternative with death. Death was an easy thing, while this treachery was torture. Yet he decided to live a traitor to his friend in the hope of one day winning this incomparable girl; and it took him but fifteen unpleasant minutes to wound to death the one virtue in which he took pride.

It was gray dawn when Regina awoke, and a flush of light was threatening the East. The tramp sat near tranquilly smoking a cigar. There was no sound

in the wilderness. When the man saw her moving he stood up respectfully with a few old letters in his hand, and held them out to her.

"I think some of the gentlemen lost 'em," he said. "If you could look 'em over, and give 'em to the captain. It ain't safe for me to have 'em."

She took them listlessly, and examined them with her thoughts elsewhere. There were no envelopes to the letters. She opened the first and read "Dear John," let her eye run down the page to the signature, and caught the words "prison," "DeLaunay," "jail," stopped in a fright, and read the paragraph, looked at the date and the signature, and then handed them to the tramp.

"Give them to the Captain with my compliments," she said in a low voice, "or to Mr. Winthrop. I think they belong to him."

Oh, what a catastrophe that letter had wrought in her mind, and what a pain it sent through her heart! But as she said to herself very sensibly an instant after, it could not have happened otherwise. He was of low extraction, he was vulgar, and, therefore, he could break a solemn promise, lie with ease, play the hypocrite, and scheme to marry her like any selfish fellow. His tears, generosity, bravery, were animal things; everyone knows that a dog can be faithful to his master even to death, and yet rob another cur of a cheap bone. Fortunately she had not committed herself. She had come near to making a great mistake, but her own caution had been strong enough to save her. It was delightful to think of. She did not owe her salvation to anyone but herself. Therefore she stood up very proudly, and thanked her stars that

the DeLaunay pride was safe. The Captain and Winthrop with her father came up to invite the women to a breakfast on the lake shore. Mr. DeLaunay was in perfect toilet, the young men looked worn, and the Captain's face utterly sad. Winthrop seemed cheerful, and his shrewd glance detected at once the very ordinary, not to say disappointed expression of Regina's calm countenance. The curious exaltation of the night previous was gone, and she glanced at Hugh as one would glance at a wall. There was no change in her polite manner, except a slight increase of her natural reserve, and disposition to silence. The Captain certainly did not notice it, and had she become an idiot at that particular moment would scarcely have given it a thought in the disaster that had befallen his beautiful ship. The few hours spent in waiting for rescuers calmed the disturbed spirits of the few interested in the episode of the letter, and when they finally sailed away to Saranac, Regina and Winthrop had the separate conviction that all's well that ends well, and that matters were very much as they had been before Captain LaRoche's troublesome son stirred calm but muddy waters.

CHAPTER XV.

AMÉDÉE.

Mr. Tuttle one day entered Winthrop's office to engage the lawyer's services for a friend. It was the most dignified event of his existence, this engaging a lawyer, and he wished the whole world to know it; but even all Saranac could not be got together in midsummer long enough to feel interested in the incident. Winthrop alone was to be impressed with Mr.

Tuttle's new sense of personal dignity on this occasion. He droned his opinions into John's ears until the lawyer fancied him a lazy bee relishing the task of boring a lawyer in his private office.

"I'm a no account feller," said Sol, "tho' I *hev* taken the pledge from the priest, an' I *hev* held on to a bank book. Sometimes it's the no account fellers that gits choosed for mighty partikler an' important persitions. I know I'm no account, but I know I am also choosed by a certain pusson to git your advice an' counsel, by law an' by court, in the best way them things air fixed up by the hull o' New York state. It's a ticklish thing, an' money's got to be put into it, an' money's to come out of it too; but Sol Tuttle provides the money, an' once in he stays in till the last dollar is jingled, an' you kin put him down for a slab-sided, holler chested, round-shouldered—"

"Hold on, Sol," cried the lawyer, waking up from his day-dream. "Let us know what you're after on the spot, and stop spouting. What do you want?"

"What do I want? Thet's for you to tell, Mr. Lawyer. We don't know what we want, *we* don't. We want our rights first off, an' as they've been tuck away nigh onto fifteen year, they must be pretty well used up I reckon. Then we want their full value, an' our good name, which is our reputation, back, an' enough spot cash to make us forgive an' forget forever. But I'm sartin there's more that we want, on'y it takes a lawyer feller to find it out."

Winthrop kept a discreet silence.

"Mr. Stone sent me to ye askin' if you would be so kind as to take up a job o' that sort?"

"Certainly," said John, "no trouble—delighted."

"That's what I told 'im. You never met Mr. Stone?"

"No," said John, "I hope to see him soon."

"Wal, that depends on your advice an' your ability. If you say so, he'll come over to-morrer an' take the town by surprise. It'll be a big surprise, too. Mr. Stone is a public character, an' we used to know him by his right name, Amedée LaRoche."

"Ah!" said John then, and a fine smile lighted up his face. His opportunity had come.

"I tole 'im," continued Sol, "that the best an' onliest way to handle this hull business was to put it in your hands. I saw the scrabblin' that ol' cuss Tim Grady an' Cap'n Sullivan had the last time. An' what did it amount to? Nothin'. Now, sez I, this time thar'll be no scrabblin'. We'll hev the best lawyer in town, an' we'll spend money on him, sez I."

"Where is Mr. Stone stopping?"

"With me an' Sairey over on the Point. You never see sech a poor washed out critter as he's got to be, that was the mos' proper boy in Saranac onct. But hard times an' drink an' despa'r,—Lor'! whar won't they land a man! I lay the hull blame onto DeLaunay. He ought to smart for it, an' he will, by gum."

"What does Mr. Stone want?"

"He wants to come home here to his folks without gittin' arrested, for things he never done. He wants his good name, which is his reputation, back. He wants to be compensified for all he stood out in Texas, consortin' with wild beasts an' wild men. He wants to be let alone. Above all he wants to git squar' with DeLaunay, the double-dyed villyan that tuck three thousand dollars an' laid it on him. Them's

the things he wants, an' here's the money to back you up in gittin' 'em "

And Sol with dignity placed one hundred dollars on the desk before the lawyer.

"Mr. Stone is not feeling well?"

"No," said Sol, "he aint. I shouldn't wonder if Con hed him, he coughs so; an' he's mighty thin. His own mother wouldn't know him. But he's got his dander up, an' his grit is suthin' fearful to see, an' he talks like,—wal, I swow, thar aint no preacher I ever heerd could hold a taller candle to him when he gits started."

"Does he drink?"

"Haint touched a drop sence spring; swars he won't never put a drop in his mouth till he's got his rights. He sez to me, Sol, if ever you see me lookin' weak at whisky, or reachin' for it, or about to take a nip, jump on me. If I once go on a racket I'd clean out all Saranac. No Eastern man knows, sez he, what a commotion and a excitement a Texas steer can raise when he gits started. Jump on me, sez he, an' I'll be thankful. An' I'll do it, sez I, with Sairey's help, an' mebbe he won't feel so thankful when I'm through with him."

"Then Mr. Stone leaves his case with me."

"That's what's the matter."

"And he is willing to be guided by my advice."

"Iv'e come over to get it and fetch it back."

"Then tell him to stay with you until I call on him. Let him be known as Mr Stone. Let him keep his mouth shut, and recognize no one. I shall go to see him this evening perhaps, or to-morrow early, and hear his story, and arrange for whatever is best."

"That's business," said Sol, and he would have continued to drone another hour but that the lawyer hurried him into the street on some pretence.

He returned him his money saying that the retainer could be paid after Mr. Stone and he had determined what to do and how to do it.

Sol went off to his boat, and John Winthrop began to study the unexpected incident which promised to bring him into pleasant and hopeful relations with Regina DeLaunay. Amedée LaRoche had returned to give trouble, as his father had given trouble on his account. Winthrop had recently added to his knowledge of this matter. He knew that money had been stolen years ago, and DeLaunay had stolen it while young LaRoche bore the odium and the punishment. Captain Sullivan had saved the DeLaunays from exposure when the victim's father had threatened them. This time the victim himself was at their doors. Compelled to pay again, there was no saying where these payments would cease with a desperado from Texas, who could never give up so profitable a blackmail. How would Regina accept his interference in her behalf? Her pride might not bear the thought of his share in a disgraceful secret. To be twice exposed, and each time before the men who thought most highly of her was bitter indeed. But he thought nothing of the risk so glad was he of his opportunity, so confident that it meant entire success for him. Hugh had blundered in his management of LaRoche. The affair should have been hushed up at once and forever. Poor business it must have been not to have killed the snake at the first blow. His claim to Regina's gratitude would be that in a short week her

danger, root and branch and seed, would be utterly destroyed at his hands. He went to see her within the hour, and had difficulty to conceal his joy under the mask of a business manner.

She always received him kindly and thought well of him. His air was distinguished, his refinement admirable, and he belonged to her set. That his letter had smashed her idol did not connect him in her mind with that painful fact. It had been very painful! She was grateful for the discovery of Hugh's true character as a person might be to the surgeon who had cut his leg off successfully; but the shock, the depression, the long convalescence were memories of years. She took consolation from remembering how much worse it might have been.

"A man has just arrived in this vicinity," Winthrop said directly, "who will interest you. His name is Amedée LaRoche. He is a drunkard and a wretch from Texas, where he led a life of debauchery, and now comes East to levy blackmail on your family. He was driven out of here fifteen years ago for common stealing, and had a bad name before he went. Through some gossip I learned the main facts about him. He is hiding in this vicinity. A friend of his came to me to day to place his case in my hands. He wants money from your family, and permission to to come back to Saranac and live in dissipation until he dies. I know that you have already given his father money to keep him quiet, and a foolish thing it was to do. I know he has no more claim on you than I have. It was a great mistake to admit his father's claim."

He talked in this strain for five minutes, merely to

give her time to recover from the shock of hearing Amedée's name. She grew pale for a moment, flushed, and was calm again. Before he had done talking she was ready to answer him.

"You are not acquainted with all the circumstances," she said. "The affair was kept very quiet."

"I know that this wretch now hopes to get some money out of you, if you will be so weak as to give it to him."

"I will speak to my father," she answered. "It is very good of you to give me notice of this matter. My father will settle everything."

"As he did before by giving money," he said, smiling, to take the harshness from his words. "That will never do. Why not take the whole matter into your own hands, and bring it to an end without disturbing your father."

"If I could," she began, and stopped with tears forcing themselves into her eyes. The outlook was so dreary!

"There is no question of your success," he said. "That is why I come to you. Your father need know nothing. The means are easy and at your hand."

"What must I do? What can I do?"

"Give me permission to do all, and do you ratify my actions. The plan is very simple. His father has been well paid, and may be made to understand that he must keep his son quiet if he wishes to keep the money."

She reflected a few minutes, and the thought of the wretched man's mother, of her father's guilt made her sad.

"I would like," she said, "to have this man allowed to stay in Saranac with his mother. He has been so long away from her."

"That can be managed if he is willing and his mother wants him."

She looked at him in surprise, and he said,

"These people are not sentimental. LaRoche is a rover, and will be one until he dies; his habits can't be the nicest now, and may soon disgust his mother. After they have lived in the same house together a few weeks or months she may get tired of him, and he get tired of civilized routine. You are not acquainted with these people. They are very practical. Amedée's father took your money, and never bothered his head about his son since."

"Yes, they must be practical," said Regina

"Do you give me permission then to represent you in this matter?"

"I am so grateful," she answered, "but first, I was thinking—though you may call it sentimental,—have you seen this man from Texas?"

"No. I may visit him to-night."

"Then take me with you, Mr. Winthrop. I would feel easier after seeing him. I would let you do as you pleased afterwards. You men of business are so hard with one another. Though I trust *you*. Yet I would like to see him, and know that he was as careless as you think."

"I fear it would make him bolder in his demands if he received a visit from you. It would give him importance. You can imagine what he must be after fifteen years in the wild West, consorting with desperadoes."

"I can imagine," she said humbly enough, for this human wreck was of her father's making.

"Take a boatman's son, fond of drink and gaming, and put him in a school of sin on the frontier, for fifteen years. This man is not merely a desperado, he is a drunkard. He became even in the West the miserable hanger-on of barrooms, too contemptible for the men who had helped to degrade him. His personal habits, his manners, his language, his very thoughts must be something vile. One might find in the dens at Whitehall something like this wretched blackmailer. Little use to shed tears over him."

Her tears fell like rain. Every word of his description went to her heart.

"Oh," she said, "can he have come to that? Can any poor soul sink so low?"

"Yes, indeed," said John cheerfully. "The only consolation being that it's their own wish. This fellow began very low, you understand, a common boatman's son, a poor Canadian of low birth and mean training. Many a man goes as low at times. It's painful, but it seems unavoidable. It will be best for you to keep away from him."

"Do you think you have drawn a true picture of this LaRoche?"

"Hardly true enough," he answered. "The truth would be very repulsive."

"Then I must surely go to see him," was her reply. "When I have seen him, I can be satisfied, and I will accept your kind offer to deal with him alone."

"Very well," he said, too astonished to protest. His warm description had only strengthened her desire to see a wretch so degraded. A woman's whim,

he thought it. What matter! He had succeeded, and her whims were trifles. So nicely had he spoken that she believed in his implied ignorance of her father's guilt. She made no effort to set him right, and was relieved at his way of treating the facts, since it saved her from saying outright that her father made confession of his guilt, and that Amedée was an innocent and wronged man. She was pleased too at the kindly way he protected the good name of his friend, Captain Sullivan; not a word of that shameful letter which had given her so much pain. What sensibility! What honor! And he was bound by no word, only by his faith to his friend!

They went together after early tea to visit the Point, where Tuttle had his modest and peculiar home. The lake was very placid in the sunset, and dotted with fishing-boats creeping homeward in a breeze too weak to support a cobweb. But they who fish for pleasure are poor oarsmen, and will endure all labors but that of rowing! The coachman of the DeLaunay establishment handled the oars, and in consequence their conversation was formal until they reached the miniature dock which Sol Tuttle had built on the water front. The fisherman came down the pathway to conduct them to the door.

"We want to see Mr. Stone," said John, "if he will be so kind as to spare us the time."

"Yes, walk right in," Sol answered, very nervous at sight of Regina. "Tain't no place to take company, but I s'posen business is business, in my yard as well as in a circus tent. Mr. Stone is jes' now perambulating around the Point with Sairey, but I reckon one minute 'll fetch him to anchor."

He hurried out to find the man, and left them to the comforts of Mrs. Tuttle's kitchen. Regina was almost terrified at the meeting with the wretch her father had brought to ruin. His rags, his sins, his broken health seemed to be more her father's than his who suffered them. She went over the details of the picture Winthrop had drawn for her and felt like weeping. The lawyer cheered her more by his manner than his words. With him the case was already settled; a poor wretch from the frontier, desperate and cowardly, attempting to blackmail wealthy people was a trifling character. He waited impatiently for the drunken reprobate who had almost spoiled the speech of his godfather.

Amedée came in alone after a few minutes, introduced by a distant shout from Sol that Mr. Stone was at hand. Regina and her lawyer were too surprised at sight of him to say anything at once; simply because he was a tall, well dressed man, pale and worn, with piercing black eyes. His movements were easy, and his look confident. There was little trace of sinner and tramp about him. Regina felt relieved, and the lawyer annoyed.

"I am Mr. Stone," said Amedée.

"This lady is Miss DeLaunay," said the lawyer in return. "I acquainted her with your arrival, with a view to—a — this interview, that before going to law you might try to arrange matters. It is often more profitable to both parties. Miss DeLaunay has called from a friendly motive, and without the knowledge of her father. Knowing this you can speak freely before her.

"I am more than grateful," said Amedée, with a

bow to Regina. "I have come back home to get a little justice: not all, you see, for I am in weak health and I do not look to getting entirely well. But if my good name were restored, and the few years that remain to me were secured against want, I would not care for more. Your father treated me cruelly, Miss DeLaunay, and yet I will say no more than this. You can see that I have a right to some compensation for the shame and suffering of fifteen years."

"You put it very mildly," said the lawyer. "I think Miss DeLaunay understands the matter very well. You must remember, though, that her desire is to spare her father as much pain as possible. He would probably resist your demands, and fight them. Her idea is a compromise, which would suit both parties."

For her life Regina could not have opened her mouth to suggest money or other compromise to the victim of her father's cruelty.

"I am not in a state to care for compromise," said Amedée. "A good name is worth more to me now than a fortune. I don't care how it is arranged, but I cannot accept anything that leaves me a thief. I have suffered everything that a fool can bring on himself—you can guess what life is in Texas—what was it all to the bad name I carried? I cannot forget that I am known as a thief in my own town. Even my parents believe I took that money. Why, I have almost believed it myself. I had made up my mind to die a ruffian in Texas, without priest or Church, killed by drink, a death good enough for a thief. But I was stung into something like decent shame when men told me how I had insulted my godfather, and

how he had looked upon me in my drunken sleep. That nerved me to come East and make a fight for justice, for the only thing that is of use to me now, a good name. I forgive DeLaunay all the rest, but my name he must give back. There can be no compromise on that. I beg pardon if I speak too harshly, Miss DeLaunay. But you understand me. You can feel what it must be to a man so poor and mean as I, to be ashamed of his name, and afraid to go live with his own."

"I do understand," she said humbly, and after that she said no more. The lawyer made a few wide suggestions, and then they went away speedily. There was nothing to be gained by conversation with a professional gambler, cool, reckless, determined, who had become suddenly insane on the matter of reputation. That was the way John Winthrop expressed it on their way home, but Regina felt that the first encounter was to the desperado's advantage.

CHAPTER XVI.

A TEXAS STEER.

Sol Tuttle appeared the next morning to tell the lawyer that Amedée would not need his services.

"The reason bein'," said Sol frankly, "that Mr. Stone don't like wimmin folks a foolin' around his lawsuits. Tain't safe, nohow, and I'm mortified an' nonplushed to think any lawyer feller that I named an' reckermended to a friend of mine should ha' done it so reckless like. Moreover an' besides the pertickler woming in this case bein' the very party my friend is lawsuiting. It looks queer, Mr. Winthrop, an I'm not afraid to say so."

"That's all right," said John pleasantly. "It was a very good thing for Mr. Stone that I saw Miss De Launay without waiting for her father. She is willing that your friend shall return to his mother, and gives her word that no proceedings will be taken against him. If he had waited until Mr. DeLaunay was ready to welcome him to Saranac, your board bill would be large, Sol, or Dannemora would be opened for him."

"I swow," said astonished Tuttle. "Wal, that was a clever move after all! Praps I'd better hev another chat with Mr. Stone afore declinin' yer services."

"No, no; I never took the case, and I could not think of taking it now. Mr. Stone must get another lawyer. No charge for what I did for him. The man will need all the money he can get before he's done with a fighter like DeLaunay, unless the young lady does something for him."

"I'm sorry," said Sol, "but he don't ask odds o' no one; an' I reckon he kin fight with the best ov 'em. I'm obliged to you, Winthrop, as far as ye went, an' I *will* say Amedée hez made a mistake in givin' up yer services."

The Texan had resigned himself to a long stay on the Point, and the news of his liberation was a surprise to him. Within an hour he was ready to take advantage of his good fortune. The gentleman who stepped into the boat with Sol was not only respectable, but distinguished in appearance. A light colored costume filled out his wasted form, his linen was spotless, his gloves neat; the moustache and imperial, the fever color in his eyes and cheeks helped to conceal the ravages of dissipation and disease. As the shore

he had not touched in fifteen years sounded under the boat's keel, and he stepped on it with a proud firm foot the emotions of his heart nearly overcame him.

He recognized almost weeping the familiar places he had once resigned all hope of seeing. How he blessed the luck, the spirit that had prompted him to take destiny in his own hands! The pleasure of this return was worth a score of years on the frontier. Old Winthrop saw him land, and after the fashion of villagers stood inquiring of his memory if they had ever met before. Amedée went up to him and said:

"Sol Tuttle tells me you are David Winthrop. I am Amedée LaRoche. You may remember me."

He spoke with a certain hard frankness, peculiar to the society of the frontier, and irritating to the society of Saranac; a trifle defiant and reckless of consequences that might follow the declamation.

"Yes, confound you, I do remember you," said old David; "you carried away some money of mine, and spent it in Texas I believe. I have no hard feelings against you. I reckon your friends will make it unpleasant enough for you without my help."

"I intend to get ahead there," said Amedée sourly. "I can make it unpleasant for them beforehand. I am no thief. I never stole a cent from any man, and I mean to prove that the money you lost was never taken by me."

"I wish you could," said Winthrop sighing. "You don't look like a thief. That's in your favor. But it is not looks, it's documents the courts want, and sworn testimony, and clever lawyers to make arguments out of straw. If you have nothing but your

looks and words to fall back on, you will be in Danne-mora before long."

"Wait and see. It is a good beginning, to know that you have some faith in me. Did you ever hear the story of my leaving for Texas?"

"No. It must have been interesting. Step in here to Lemon's, and tell it to me."

The hotel office was vacant and there the story was told to old Winthrop as once before Amedée told it in the letter.

"Curious," said the old man, "but not above De-Launay. Clever rascal. But hold on. This is a rather dry story. Boy, bring in the favorite, and some glasses."

Amedée began to say he touched nothing, and Sol to murmur that the pledge—

"That's all right," said David, "don't touch another drop to-day. But I've met you first, and you must celebrate your happy arrival at my expense."

However, the old man felt some misgivings at seeing the hungry grip of the glasses taken by the two men, who had been abstinent for many weeks.

"Not another drop after this remember," he repeated. "Nary a drop," said Sol. "Honor bright."

"And here's to your success," said David. "May you show up the villian who ruined us both, and clear your name of every stain. I would like to help you, but I am old, and broken down. I am no use except to look on at stronger men doing the work. You have a hard a job to do, and you don't look over healthy. But I wish you luck. Something may come of it."

Winthrop went on his way. The two men, more than elated by the warmth of his reception and the strength of the whisky, posed on the hotel veranda in high good humor. Amedée felt at home in his native town, and enjoyed to the full his position as the hero of a romantic story soon to be made known to the world. An old man coming down the street was pointed out to him as Tim Grady. The latter's eye was already fixed on the stranger of fine appearance, and Tim Grady's mind was busy with surmises on the stranger's occupation.

"Mornin', Tim, said Sol, beamingly.

"Good morning, Mr. Tuttle," said Tim, with dignity.

"I am glad to meet you, Mr. Grady," said Amedée in his lowest, humblest tone, and he had a voice and glance of winning sweetness, "and I hope you will forgive me for my behavior the last time we met. If I had known you —"

"Hould on," said Mr. Grady, "I never to me own intimate knowl-edge had the honor o' meetin' you afore. Yer name, please."

"Amedée LaRoche," said he still more humbly.

Complex emotion was the destruction of Mr. Grady at all times. The suddenness of this low-voiced statement fixed the old man to the street as if he had been turned to stone. A handsome gentleman on the streets of Saranac was not to be reconciled with the drunken vagabond of a Texan village. The transformation had been accomplished without his aid or knowledge. The prophet had missed the most important event of twenty years in the history of Saranac. His emotions merged finally into a feeling of

wounded pride, and a chuckle from Mr. Tuttle brought back his self-possession.

"We met at a saloon in Texas," he said sourly, "an' we meet agin at a Saranac saloon. I think ye had enough o' these places to avoid 'em, Amedée. Have ye seen yer mother?"

"I am just going there," said Amedée.

"An' have ye seen Mr. DeLaunay?"

"He is willing I shall stay here if I want to."

"Yer all right then, so. Well, I can't say that I'm overjoyed to meet you, an' I wouldn't for me life take any stock in yer sobriety an' reg'larity; but ye look well, an' I hope ye'll do well, an' take the shame off yer dacent father, an' the sorra from yer poor mother. What are ye goin' to do first?"

"Nothing," said Amedée, "first and last."

"That'll suit ye," said Mr. Grady shortly, and he left his godson without a word of sympathy or goodwill. Amedée felt downcast.

"The man they say I stole from treated me better than this," he said gloomily.

"You spoiled his speech," chuckled Sol. "He was cutting a big figger out in Texas, and you smashed his first chance to make a speech,—an' his last I reckon. How kin yer expect him to give you a warm welcome."

Mr. Grady came back again in a moment and took Amedée aside.

"I have just wan bit of advice for ye," he said importantly. "Kape from the dhrink. It was the ruin o' ye from the start, an' it will desthroy ye intirely, now, if ye give way to it."

How much the man profited by it was plain the next moment, when he and Sol renewed their vows of

friendship over a second dose of whisky at the hotel bar, and solemnly declared that this was the last drop to touch their lips that day. In the quiet town Amedée made a lively sensation. His fine appearance and easy, often reckless manner were attractive to the heavy natures of the citizens. He had a good memory, and recognized acquaintances of his early youth readily. Passing from one house to another, and leaving one group of old friends only to gather another group further on detained him some hours. Every moment he was starting to his mother's house, and every moment was delayed. The doses of whisky were frequently repeated, for Saranac people are convivial to an extreme degree. Mr. Tuttle within two hours had entirely surrendered to his old enemy, and was now moving about like a waterlogged ship, unable to talk or think or sleep, wearing a vacant smile for all comers. Amedée grew brighter under the influence. Stupidity came to him only after long periods of hysterical vivacity and insanity. He lost sight of his danger very speedily, and forgot his mother altogether. Those whom he had first impressed with his fine manner began to smile early in the afternoon when his nervousness and Sol's utter collapse could be contrasted. They were seen for hours on the streets. John Winthrop met them once, and bowed very stiffly. Sol tried to speak to him but could only motion with his hand.

"I am obliged to you," said Amedée smartly, "for what you have done. I didn't mean to hurt your feelings by taking my case from you. But I wasn't satisfied, you know."

"There is nothing to complain of," said John loftily.

He watched them from his office window for an hour with a pleasant, amused expression on his face, and he said to himself that things looked fair for Regina's peace of mind in the future. It was while he was watching the movements of Amedée and Mr. Tuttle that the latter collapsed. He sat down for a moment in a saloon, and gave rousing evidence that his sleep was not to be broken until the next morning at the earliest. For the rest of this notable day the man, who had come from Texas to vindicate his good name before his friends, made his tour alone.

In his ramblings he saw the old church where he had made his first confession and Communion. He went into the graveyard and read the names on the new tombstones, many of them his old playmates. He stood at the church-door and wept, not daring to enter the holy place; his tears were of course largely prompted by alcohol, but the feeling of reverence was a large part of the man's character. Further down the street the old school-house stood; he peered through its windows and wept again as he thought of the innocent boy who sat at the desks there twenty years before. His tears failed him at the back room of the saloon where his foolishness had early begun to display itself in gambling and drunkenness. The sight of it did not please him, but he stopped at the bar and took several drinks of his favorite liquor with a few friends. Saranac liquor was mild compared with the Texas stuff, and so far it had given him only a touch of recklessness and a repressed desire to raise a war whoop, and sing a war-song.

The citizens of Saranac at seven o'clock in the evening were well acquainted with his story and his

extraordinary charges against Mr. DeLaunay. They studied him with delight, and were half inclined to believe him, so fine was his appearance. But this humor was changing. The innumerable visits to village bars, and his undoubted sobriety of manner after swallowing liquor enough to stupefy two hard drinkers, let loose the spirit of fun. Bets began to be made on the time necessary to set him drunk. Respect for him began to wane. His tragic story was burlesqued in dumb show by the idlers on the corners. It was about this time he passed from the sentimental state into that condition of mania which Mr. Grady had witnessed in Texas. For the first time that day he wandered by the office where DeLaunay had pointed a revolver at him, and banished him from the town a thief. The mere recollection of it threw him into a fury. He would not wait for law or persuasion or terror to avenge him. He would right all his wrongs on the spot. With this resolution he gave an Apache war whoop and fired two shots from his revolver into the air.

If the main street of the town had heaved itself into the sky, or disappeared in the lake the villagers could not have been more surprised or terrified. Everyone rushed into the street and rushed back to the house again; for the war-whoop and the firing continued in a way to suggest an Apache raid on Saranac with fifty warriors in the band. The single constable and the idlers rushed to the scene, bravely, and were scattered like sheep in an instant. Amedée dashed upon them with whoops and flashing revolvers, and passed up the street like a madman. Doors and windows were barred before him, citizens dodged

for the nearest shelter, lights went out, fleeing spectators carried word all through the village that a maniac was killing scores of people on the main street, and blood was already flowing in the gutters. For a half-hour the Texan exile owned Saranac. He appeared so quickly in unexpected points that no one ventured forth while his weapon could be heard. He was searching for DeLaunay, but reason had finally deserted him. He knew not what he was seeking, but howled and raged and shot into the air in pure ferocity. The constable had disappeared.

Mr. Tim Grady, in a remote corner of the village, was reading the fourth page of his weekly paper—he never reached the eighth until the next number arrived—and heard nothing of the disturbance. When the cries of frightened people hurrying by brought him to the door he got the common story, and shared the common dread. The whoops had a familiar sound, however, and suddenly Mr. Grady recognized the character of the situation. Amedée LaRoche was mad. In Texas they lassoed him in this condition and threw him into a barn. Could not the same process be tried in Saranac? Mr. Grady pondered a few moments until an idea came to him, then he took a clothes-line and set forth to capture his godson. He was amazed to find the village deserted. In only one remote residence a light burned. It was Amedée's home where his mother all unconscious waited and prayed for him! A little search unearthed the constable, and to him Mr. Grady unfolded his plan. Ropes were placed across the pathway, and concealed men held them with instructions to trip the desperado when he came that way. The consta-

ble and Mr. Grady with all the others would fall upon him and bind him.

The Texan walked into the trap, and fell in a perfect tangle of ropes. Before he could recover himself every man in the party threw themselves on Mr. Grady and the constable as they seized Amedée, and effectively prevented them from binding him. In fact it became a desperate struggle on the part of the undermost to save themselves from suffocation. Amedée's howls and the men's curses drowned the constable's orders. The louder grew the struggle the worse it became for the men underneath. The almost successful capture became a burlesque. The crowd set upon the constable, and tried to bind him while Amedée slipped away in silence and ran towards the lake with winded Mr. Grady in hot pursuit. The latter had not breath enough to call his aids to follow. Seeing the direction which the fugitive took a great fear seized him that in his mania Amedée would drown himself, and very fervent were his prayers as he stopped short and turned towards a boat on the lake shore.

He hoped that Amedée hearing no pursuit would turn from the water; if not, the boat might serve to save him from drowning. He had no sooner pushed off from the shore than the splash of a heavy body falling into the water was heard. Mr. Grady pulled desperately in the direction of the sound. Amedée made no secret of his movements; he swam directly into the bay and headed for Tuttle's house on the Point. He had no intention of committing suicide. In a few moments Mr. Grady had lost sight of him. With the hope that he would reach the

other shore safely Tim returned to the scene of the late encounter, and engaged two men to row across the bay after the fugitive. The constable was much depressed by his struggle with his own men. Word was sent around of the fate of the maniac, and in a few minutes the terrorized population were on the streets discussing the great sensation. It was the common opinion that the madman was drowned, and if he were not that he deserved it.

But Amedée was not drowned. The cold plunge had subdued his mania, but had not restored his senses. A gentle stupor benumbed his faculties, and he swam by instinct towards the only light which he could see from the level of the water. His course was parallel with the shore towards the railroad bridge. In a half hour he touched bottom and stumbled towards the light. It shone from his mother's window, from the dolphin lamp that had thus shone for twenty years. Madame LaRoche had heard nothing of her son's arrival, and given no heed to the curious noises on the street. She was alone that night. The altar was lit, and she was praying fervently before it when the door opened and a haggard, bedraggled creature staggered in stupidly, stared at the altar and fell in a heap on the floor. It was thus Amedée LaRoche came home to his mother.

CHAPTER XVII.

BANISHED.

The constable had moulded public opinion in his own behalf before ten o'clock the next morning; to this effect, that all Saranac believed him the hero of the attack on the maniac, while Tim Grady's name was

barely mentioned. Tim wholly unconscious walked forth to enquire into the fate of his god son, feeling that all eyes were upon him. As he greeted each neighbor the smile on his face invited compliments, but compliments did not come. The constable saw him in the distance and avoided him. His admirers met him and were dumb on his achievement. Mr. Grady was mystified until he heard a man describe for a stranger the whole episode. In this description the constable was the only actor.

"A very thrue story," said Tim proudly, "except a slight mistake in the names. 'Twas I meself that found Constable Dingy hidin' behind the red store, afeard of his life to show himself. I med the plan to catch LaRoche, and I brought down the ropes wi' me own hands. Meanwhile the constable was chewin' straws in the dark, waitin' for a fair moon. I put the b'ys in their places an' gev them instructions. Ov coorse Dingy helped. Whin Amedée sthruck out for the lake I meself pursued him, an' got a boat to go afther him. Who in the devil med out that poor ould Dingy did everythin'."

"I reckon I heerd him tellin' it himself to a lot o' fellows this very mornin'," said the man.

"Well, ye heerd him lyin' then," said Tim rudely, "an' ye can tell him so for me if you meet him afore I do."

Tim's inquiries proved the constable's diligence. Nowhere was Mr. Grady connected with the rescue of the town. He had some trouble in securing his rights to fame, until it became known that the constable was earnestly keeping out of his way. Then the efforts of Mr. Grady to get justice were publicly applauded as

he flew through the streets close upon the heels of the village official ; but though the latter was often in view he did not permit Mr. Grady to get near enough to hail him.

"I'd like to nail him now wid his own lies," said Tim, "for to-morrow there won't be anny satisfaction in it. Dingy is wan o' those dhried-up Vermounters; he's a fish that ye can eat if ye kill him an' cook him on the shpot, but wait till mornin' an' ye can't handle him."

The fish was not killed and cooked that day, but Mr. Grady recaptured his honors. In addition Tim condensed and shaped public opinion with regard to Amedée. In discussing what was to be done with a character so dangerous, many citizens thought this first display of wild spirits might well be pardoned in view of a long and hard exile just ended. Tim Grady disposed of these tender hearts on the spot.

"There's but one thing to be did," said he severely. "He must leave the town and go back to Texas. They can lasso him out there, an' they have constables able to manage sich divils. Will it happen again? Sure, that's been the way wid him the last ten years. Every month ov his life he wint dhrinkin', an' howlin', an' shootin' around Texas jist as he did last night. He had friends that let him run so far, an' thin they lassoed him like a steer, an' threw him any. where till he kem back to his senses. If ye let him sthay in Saranac ye must hire a lassoer, an' be ready to pay damages for the harm he does."

In a few hours the Saranac fathers came to Tim's conclusions. Out of respect for the Captain his father, in consideration of his long exile, nothing was to be

done against Amedée ; but he was to leave the town at once and forever. Tim was chosen to announce the sentence, an office which vindicated him before the LaRoches for the hard opinions he had often expressed on Amedée. No one spoke of Amedée's innocence, or of his charges against DeLaunay. Even ill-minded David Winthrop could only shake his head in disgust when it came to connecting innocence with such a savage. The man in drink was capable of any crime. This sentiment became universal. Another grew up beside it which no one could account for, if an accounting had been asked : Mr. DeLaunay was an honorable and much slandered man, and it was a great pity that a desperado should have been allowed even for an hour to go about the village streets denouncing a most eloquent and influential citizen as a thief. John Winthrop had deftly set this sentiment afloat, and laughed to see its sudden popularity.

When Tim went down at noon to warn the Texan of the feeling in the town he found the Captain and Madame in a tremulous state over the poor drunkard sleeping off the effects of his debauch in the next room. They did not yet know the full gravity of his case, and when Tim made it known the old dogged spirit arose in the Captain's breast.

"I kin stan' a lawsuit, Grady," he said sourly, "'s well 's the next. Thief or not, my son stays in Saranac with his mother, d'ye hear ? She won't let him go."

Mr. Grady described the terror of the villagers the night previous, and reminded him that this madness was one of Amedée's most frequent tricks.

"It's aisy enough to fight the town," said Tim,

"but kin ye stand the expense? If ye go bail for that b'y, ye'll be med to pay for every single thing he smashes. It takes him only tin minutes to desthroy a bar worth a fortune. He carries revolvers. He jumps on people. What'll ye be worth if ye go on his bond to keep the peace? Five hundred dollars every time, an' the coort wont spare ye. I pity the mother, but what kin ye do other than send him away?"

The money question staggered LaRoche, and removed the whole case from the region of sentiment. He thought it over some hours, and could see no way to combine paternal pride and financial interest. John Winthrop met him, and mentioned a point which had been overlooked.

"I'm glad your boy is at home aga'n," said the suave lawyer; "I want to warn you, though, that he means to make trouble. He has been talking through the town about Mr. DeLaunay, and the gentleman must be very angry over it. I am told that you were paid a nice sum to keep the boy in order. If you don't do it, and if your son bothers DeLaunay you will be asked to give back that money. Your son is to be put in bonds to keep the peace, and you will be the bondsman. How often can you stand being bled like that, when he goes on a spree, and DeLaunay will certainly ask you for the money he gave you. I tell you this in secret. I have no business to interfere in the matter at all. Please don't mention my name for giving you this hint, which is worth something to you."

LaRoche thanked him very heartily. He went away in a rage. As before when he sought to do something

for his son the whole world and his own interest seemed to rise against him. This time his son alone was to blame. Had he come home like a man, not a maniac, there had been some hope for him. Now, to raise a hand in his behalf meant the loss of much money, so much that the pilot grew afraid of Amedée's remaining a day longer in Saranac. He went home in a panic. In a few hours he must be on duty and would not return to Saranac for two days. He had to protect himself against danger during that time, and the plan which presented itself to him was that Amedée should go back to Sol Tuttle, or accompany himself that night to Whitehall.

Amedée was up when he returned, quite sober, and dressed as neatly as on the day previous. His heavy eyes and worn face had lost their freshness, and the wetting had taken the gentility from his garments, but his smile was bright for his father.

A ten minutes' talk with his boy shook the Captain's resolution utterly, and perhaps, but for Mr Grady's appearance to announce banishment, he would have gone away without dismissing his son from his mother's house. Tim had no scruples, and was swelling with the importance of his office. He hoped Amedée was feeling better and stronger and *able to travel*; he was sure his memory had come back to him with the double wetting he had given himself the day before; a very pleasant time he had to be sure, which must have reminded him of Texas; and by the way did he intend to return soon to that great State.

"I shall never return to it," said Amedée.

"People are anxious to know," said Mr. Grady

calmly, "after yer performance yestherday. They have finally concluded that Saranac is too shmali an' too poor to support a young gintleman of your ixpensive shootin' tastes; an' they think ye ought to go back to Texas; lasteways they sent me to tell ye Saranac is no place for ye; an' if ye're not gone out of it in three days they'll arrest ye an' put ye in bond to keep the peace."

Madame LaRoche gave a cry of agony, and the pilot hung his head.

"Bonds," said Amedée, scornfully, "my father can give bonds."

"If it's only bonds," said Madame, "it is nothing."

"I thought so," said Tim, studying his godson critically. "Ruined yerself, ye think nothin' o' robbin' yer father. Bonds, is it? Much ye tho't o' bonds yestherday, whin ye ran around the village crazy, cursin' an' shootin' like a divil. What fool 'ud give bonds for the likes o' ye? But I have no doubt yer impidence is sthrong enough to ask bonds iv yer father here, that ye never did a hand's turn for since he had the bad luck to bring ye into the world."

Amedée's face grew thoughtful as he looked at his father sitting with averted face.

"What do you say, father?" he asked. "Could you be my bondsman?"

"No," said the pilot. "The risk is too great," and his head dropped lower. Madame was very angry with him, that a mere bond should be weighed against her son, and she reproached Mr. Graily, but Amedée checked her gently and said to his father:

"It was wrong to expect you to give bonds for a

man that can't be trusted. Tell your friends, Tim Grady, I shall leave Saranac in three days."

Madame protested vehemently, but the pilot ran off to his steamer while she was declaiming, and Mr. Grady escaped to tell how well he had done this task. Amedée would leave Saranac as the fathers had ordered.

It was a hard blow to Amedée, yet its bitterness strengthened him. If he were to get back his good name drink must become an unknown quantity to him, and he took a second resolution of deeper earnestness than that which had brought him out of his land of bondage, Texas. His mother's grief was harder to bear, and her pleadings were pitiful. That he was able to resist them proved a strength of will unusual in him. She was in keen distress, but with her training of fifteen years in the school of self-repression, it was easy for her to conceal it.

One chance was left to her. Captain Sullivan might save Amedée yet, and his mother would feel for her, and speak to the Captain in her behalf. Filled with hope she went to see Mrs. Sullivan. Kindly eyes looked pitifully at her as she passed, for all the old people knew her story and her hope, and were grieved at the disappointment. A beautiful woman about to enter Mr. Winthrop's office paused to look at her, and seemed shocked at her appearance. Madame paid no attention. She was bent only on saving her son. Mrs. Sullivan had never received a visit from her before, although they had been neighbors for three decades. Madame's command of English was limited, but she could make herself understood.

"M'sieu' Tim Grady," she said slowly, "you un'-stan'—"

"Faith that name'll do for anny language, haythen or Christian," said Mrs. Sullivan.

"M'sieu' Tim Grady no want my boy 'ere in Saranac. 'E mus' go 'way, far, to Texas, un'stan'. *Mon mari* 'fraid ver much to mek de bond for Amedée. Me no afraid, *mais* Amedée, *pauvre garçon*, no want, no take bond. Big expense. Oh, *Mon Dieu*, I can't lose my boy. M'sieu' Sullivan, your boy, he speak for Amedée to Tim Grady, n' Amedee stay home *toujours*."

"An' may I ask, ma'am," said Mrs. Sullivan between anger and irony, "what that great man Mr. Grady has to do with your boy shtayin' where he pleases. It seems to me this ould gentleman, the ouldher he gits, the more he interfares wid himself."

"I think," said her daughter who had entered in time to hear this speech, "that Mr. Grady was sent by the constable and the justice to tell her son he must leave town on account of his behavior yesterday. He is Amedée's god-father."

Able to describe her wishes in French, Madame spoke feelingly to the two women in her son's behalf, and easily won their promise to interest the Captain in preventing the infliction of a second exile on her son.

"God has been so good to me," said Madame, "to bring him home, to save him from drowning: I wish Him to leave him with me till he dies. He cannot live long, poor boy, his cough is terrible."

Mrs. Sullivan blessed herself.

"An' is it Tim Grady that 'ud put a sick man out ov his mother's house," she exclaimed. "Well, well, the impidence o' some is wondherful, an' the patience ov

others is beyant countin'. Ma'am, I'll set Hugh on Mr. Grady's thrack, an' I'll go bail the ould man 'll lave Saranac afore his god-son."

CHAPTER XVIII.

A CLIMAX.

John Winthrop went up one day to tell Regina all that had happened. His manner was frank, but at heart he felt how much he was really keeping back from her on the plea of professional prudence. The girl was, as she ought to be, delightfully honest. She would allow such brutes as Amedée to take away her jewelry and her purse because an exile of fifteen years was very painful. He had to protect her against her own beautiful but imprudent sympathies; and what a swelling of his heart there was at the bare idea of protecting her! Yet he was doing it on business principles, and not a spark of sentiment ever betrayed itself in him.

"The unexpected has happened," he told her dryly. "LaRoche made a fine impression. The fathers wa'ked into Saranac through what you must permit me to call your imprudent kindness."

"But fifteen years—his mother," she murmured.

"True, these are things women remember. However, luck was on your side. LaRoche got drunk after his Texan fashion, captured the town with fire arms, terrorized the place for two hours, and then jumped into the lake—don't scream—he's not dead, but perhaps he feels worse. His fine impression is dead. Saranac was so frightened at the originality and expensiveness of this one drunk that the fathers

have given him the choice of departure or bonds for good behavior. As there are no bonds forthcoming he will return to Texas this week. He talked freely of your father, as I warned you, and made wild charges. Not a soul to-day believes a word he said. He is in greater disgrace than before."

"It is all very unhappy," said Regina. "I hoped he would stay quietly with his mother, and [give her so much comfort."

"He did not go near his mother at all," said John. "Nor did his mother care much to have so drunken a creature about. Still he has since charmed her into taking a natural interest in him. She is really trying to get some person to go on his bond, poor woman. Quite a hopeless task!"

But a keen glance at Regina's face convinced him it might not be so hopeless.

"The difficulty in getting bondsmen would be nothing," he continued, "if LaRoche were an ordinary stupid drunkard. But he is not. He is a mad devil in drink. He becomes crazy, ferocious and murderous. It was wonderful that he did not shoot a few citizens this time. Tim Grady, his godfather, says that every drunk in Texas was marked by the same terrible mania. What would have been your feelings this moment, Miss DeLaunay, had innocent blood been shed by this man! What a new shame, what a terrible grief to the poor mother had the gallows ended her son's career!"

"How awful," said Regina paling at the thought.

"I must insist," he said seizing his opportunity, "that hereafter you leave this matter entirely to me. You must promise me that you will do nothing for

this LaRoche, and keep out of his way should he attempt to gain your sympathy. This is a very, very serious matter, in which you have made one great mistake already."

"I admit it, and I promise, Mr. Winthrop. It frightens me to think what might have happened from my permission to him to return."

"Thank you," said John cheerfully. "Your promise reassures me. We have nothing to do but let the elders deal with LaRoche."

"I thought perhaps it would be proper to tell my father now," she said. "He must soon hear it from others, and—"

"No necessity," he interrupted gently. "Why annoy him with absurdities. To tell the truth I am afraid he would feel called upon to go to the judge and offer himself as bondsman. Men of his character, charged with crime, do the most absurd things to let the world see their confidence in their own innocence. No, he must not be told."

Regina felt a warmth about her heart at this sincere and flattering speech. Winthrop believed in her father's innocence and in Amedée's guilt. The fact somehow raised her father in her esteem a little. Perhaps she had been too hard on him, and had accepted his admissions of guilt too quickly and too liberally. He was so much the gentleman in speech and manner, and Amedée was so vulgar a rogue! How could guilt associate itself with such refinement, or innocence with such vulgarity! She felt so grateful to him that the tears came into her eyes as he rose to go. After all this was a friend. He read her manner like a printed paragraph and went on his

way with a smile of surpassing joy on his lips. A few days, a few weeks of waiting, and his hopes would flower! Meanwhile Mrs. Sullivan was doing much to hinder their flowering, and that same afternoon attacked Tim Grady with all her forces.

"I've heerd o' banishin' people afore, Misther Grady but I never thought I'd live to see it wid me own two eyes in Saranac. Crummle banished the Irish across the say, an' the Queen's coort med me own first cousin on me mother's side run away like mad to France. But thim wor ginerals, an' Queens, an' coorts! They had nothin' else to do, an' they med money out of it. But you're not a queen or a coort, Misther Grady,—though divil knows what idays you do be havin' o' yerself,—an' what right have ye to banish Amedée from his mother I'd like to know."

"I don't admit, Mrs. Soolivan," answered Grady, "that I'm banishin' Amedée for it's the coort that's doin' it. But if I could banish annywan like Crummle or the Queen did, 'tis I that would sind that blaguard to the pole if I could, an' maybe yerself along wid him."

"An' he's yer godson," said Mrs. Sullivan with scorn. "An' ye're as much bound as his own father to look afther his sowl. Where are ye sendin' his sowl to, ye poor ould banisher?"

"I was proud of him wanst for me godson, but I've lost me pride. I don't know where his sowl may go to,—a poor place I think for he acts like a vilyan that had none. Sowl or not, ma'am, he goes out o' Saranac this blessed day, an' he may thank me that it's not to jail he's goin' for massacrayin' the town.

He thried hard enough to get himself hanged for murder."

"Oh, but it was the pity," said Mrs. Sullivan with mock sincerity, "that he didn't take off a few ould men while his hand was in it. 'Twould have been a blessin' to the town. Why, ye'll become a Roman imperor yit, Tim Grady, an' knock off our heads like praties whin it suits ye."

"'Tisn't heads I'd knock off," said Tim with a bland smile, "but I'd deprive yez o' yer tongues, so I would."

"Oh, an' that's what yed like, to have a crowd o' neighbors that cudn't say a word back to ye. Well. I'll tell ye for wan, Tim Grady, ye're not goin' to be lord and masther of us all, an' if I had to go on me knees from this to Ireland I'll see that Amedée stays wid his mother. Put that in yer pipe an' smoke it. I'm not a queen or a coort or a ginal, an' I have no idays o' bein' sich, nor I wouldn't have 'em; but if I've lived this long, an' raised a son that's captain o' the finest steamer on the lake, an' can't get ahead o' Tim Grady, thin it's time for me to be dyin'. So look out for yerself, ould man, from this minit."

"What'll ye do," said Tim, slyly.

"Ye'll be able to tell whin I've done it, sor."

"Yer fine captain was in it afore," said Mr. Grady with a sneer, "an' a nice mess he made of it. Maybe he's in for another mess. Wid all yer talk o' doin' great things, let me tell you there's jist wan thing to do. Anny sowl that goes down to the coort an' gives bonds for one thousand dollars can keep Amedée in Saranac. Good-day, ma'am."

The Captain was sleeping in his room upstairs, and

the earnestness of the conversation awoke him. He caught the last remarks of Tim. They amused him. He had heard from LaRoche of his son's return, and of the grand spree ; but he had carefully refrained from interesting himself in the details. He had no desire to get entangled in the domestic secrets of his neighbors after his recent experience with the DeLaunays.

He declined to interfere much to his mother's chagrin. Then a queer notion disturbed him, and he asked how Amedée came to Saranac, and how he began to drink that day. She could not tell him, and in a spirit of perversity he went forth to inquire. He was fortunate enough to meet Sol Tuttle and his Sairey, who refused to allow Sol abroad now unless in her company. Sol's narrative was melancholy but striking.

"The boy come in one night nigh on to six weeks ago," said Sol, "skeered to death, 'fraid DeLaunay might see him. We rigged him up summat, an' then I come over to see Jack Winthrop 'bout goin' to law with the DeLaunays. He went an' fetched over Miss DeLaunay to the Point, an' they had a confab, an' she said as how Amedée might live in Saranac, an' so the boy come over in my company. By gum, when I come to think on't, the hull blamed thing looks like a cussed trick. The first one we met was ol Squire, an' he asked us to drink. We did. Then everybody asked us to drink. We did. I don't remember any more. But now they're goin' to bounce that boy. It's the cruellest, consarndest, meanest thing that ever's been did in this cussed mean town. Wny, he's dyin' now with consumption, an' he ain't goin' to live a year nohow."

The Captain turned to Mrs Tuttle for confirmation of these statements.

"Oh, he's gone," said the woman; "you ought to hear him cough. He's peart, though, an' so wild you can't tell what's wrong with him right off. But I watched him six weeks, an' I'm sartin he'll be dead before Christmas."

The DeLaunays were defending themselves against danger through Winthrop. There was a bare possibility that Amedée's spree had been foreseen and arranged. It was a trick of the legal profession which Winthrop would rejoice in practising on his opponents. The Captain's ire was roused, and his sympathy too. Since Amedée was suffering from fatal disease some clemency should be shown him. Fifteen years of exile were too much for an innocent man to endure and then be hustled in new disgrace from his native town by the guilty. The Captain determined there and then that Amedée must remain in Saranac and that no bonds be given for his good behavior. The proper person to be put under bonds was Regina's fellow. He went at once to the town officials, to the few influential citizens, and to the magistrate. Tim Grady had been ahead of him an hour, and it was made plain that mountains might be moved much easier than they. He did not relish a visit to Regina, but there seemed no other way to accomplish his aim, and he went to her residence. They had not met since the shipwreck on Lake Champlain, and greetings were coldly exchanged. He was glad to find her so ungracious. It strengthened him much, and in turn she was grateful that his awkwardness grated on her nerves.

"I heard this morning," he said, "that they are about to dismiss Amedee LaRoche from Saranac. You know as well as I that such a thing would not be right. I come to ask your intercession for him. If your father expresses a wish to the magistrate, it will be obeyed."

"I really do not see why he should," she answered, but her eyes sparkled with anger. "He does not know of the man's presence here, I do not intend to tell him. When this LaRoche first came I gave him permission"—she reddened at the words but did not withdraw them—"to live in Saranac. He misused it. He is to blame, and I cannot interfere."

"I think you should interfere," he said bluntly. "Please understand my earnestness. The man must not leave Saranac, nor be simply permitted to stay here. I shall use any honorable means to bring that about. You can do it by a word."

"I shall not say the word."

"You know that he is dying from consumption, perhaps?"

"No," she answered bravely, but the information was a shock to her.

"He cannot live more than a year or two. He is a broken-hearted man as well. Knowing how unjustly he has suffered a long exile you cannot think of putting this additional injury upon him."

"He put it upon himself, Mr. Sullivan. His behavior a few days ago is the only reason why he must leave Saranac."

"That was an accident which will not be repeated. And perhaps he was not altogether to blame for it."

"I wish you would end this interview, sir. I cannot do anything in the matter."

"Then I must see your father."

In that moment she hated him. He seemed as bent on obtaining justice for the wretched Amedée as before he had been resolute in protecting her from exposure. Her anger and determination had not the slightest effect on him. In a fit of pique she exclaimed:

"Why are you so perverse? Was it not you that once saved us from this man? And now you seem ready to hand us over to him."

"You are quite wrong, ma'am," said the Captain with a real grin of delight. "The poor fellow can't do you one ounce of harm if he talked forever, and he can't talk much longer. You have nothing to fear. He has all to lose by this second kick-out. His mother's care, a few months of comfort in a decent home, and permission to die among his friends aren't much for a man to ask. We would give a dog such favors. And this man, you can't forget, is an innocent man, suffering for another's sins. I'm not quite sure that it's fair and just to treat him as a nuisance, and that's the way I'm treating him. The man who will give bonds for his good behavior can keep him in town in spite of all. But it would be an outrage on decency if that poor fellow were treated that way. No bonds, Miss DeLaunay, and no permissions for Amedée to stay in Saranac, and I must tell your father so."

Regina could have said bitter things in answer to this speech, but she felt it would not be wise. She said haughtily,

"Since you must see him, excuse me while I go to prepare him for this unexpected annoyance."

In the hall she met John Winthrop just entering. He had heard of the efforts Hugh was making in Amedée's behalf, and lost no time in putting his clients on their guard. He was too late. With deep interest he listened to her account of the recent conversation.

"Prepare your father," he advised, "while I talk with the Captain. If he is determined to keep Amedée here there will be no restraining him openly. Strategy can match him, though, and do you hold firmly to your position, and instruct your father in like manner."

When John entered the Captain greeted him with a smile that spoke volumes.

"I knew there was a nigger in the woodpile," he said, "but I never guessed 'twas thee."

"I am Miss DeLaunay's legal adviser in this matter," said John formally.

"Was it by your advice old man Winthrop got Amedee to take his first glass of liquor in Saranac, which raised all this trouble?"

"I wasn't aware of my father's responsibility."

"It would have been just like you, John," said the Captain. "I know you foresaw the spree if you didn't encourage it, and invent it. The man hadn't touched a drop in three months before. Had he kept sober a month there wouldn't be any need of this errand."

"I instructed Miss DeLaunay to have nothing more to do with the affair, leaving things to take their natural course."

"Good advice, John, but it won't work now. I have made up my mind that the man shall stay in Saranac, and if your clients don't care to help in keeping him here, they can take the consequences."

"What are they?"

"Their legal adviser must know."

"Those absurd stories about money stolen and books doctored? Very likely romances."

"I think so myself," said the Captain humorously.

The lawyer was puzzled. He made, however, a direct assault on Hugh's determination to aid Amedée and succeeded in nothing. The Captain took his legal adroitness as an exhibition of cleverness, which ought to be admired; and then Regina entering with her father the young men put on their politest looks and most serious behavior. John never felt his advantage over the Captain so keenly, and this time he was on the winning side. He was defending the dear girl against the chivalrous but vulgar maladroitness of Sullivan. Mr. DeLaunay was simply superb on this occasion.

"Never was more surprised in my life," he said, gaily, "to hear that this Texan cowboy was in Saranac, and so lively. My daughter has told me your kind efforts and intentions on his behalf, Captain, but they are quite thrown away. I did all that was fair when I settled a neat sum, a very neat sum, on his father. Mr. Grady thought it very handsome, but I call it simply neat. I really can't do anything more, and as for letting him stay in the town I would not entertain the thought for an instant. Moreover, if you have anything more to communicate on this sub-

ject, our legal adviser"—waving a graceful hand to John, who bowed—"can attend to you."

Regina writhed under this speech which Hugh, as she could see, received with amusement.

"I don't care to urge you," said the Captain in his heartiest voice, "but I want to say that I don't agree with Winthrop in his way of treating this matter. The trick may work smoothly now, but how about three months from this. The man is really sick with consumption, when he leaves town his mother goes with him, and they will probably live on the Point with the Tuttles. That breaks up a home. The man is living only two miles away. He has hosts of relatives. There will be some immense talking done among them all in three months. Mr. Winthrop's father is interested in this talk, and would willingly try to give it form to work mischief. Then public opinion changes, and who can tell what may happen."

Certainly the Captain was a pitiless adversary, when he dealt his friend so ruthless a blow in the allusion to his father. It drew a start from DeLaunay and an exclamation from his daughter, but John remained outwardly calm. His heart was fired with anger, however, for the enmity of Winthrop and DeLaunay was truly his weakest point, and allusion to it humiliated him. He had a savage reply ready.

"I see that Captain Sullivan puts a little faith in the stories which this LaRoche was telling in town the day he got intoxicated," he said. "He accused Mr. DeLaunay of his own speculations. I had once heard these charges from my father, who insisted on an examination of the old books of the firm. The result vindicated Mr. DeLaunay as clearly as it would

condemn this LaRoche to jail. I can bear witness to this fact."

He paused. Regina flushed uneasily and her father posed like a seraph. The irreverent Captain suppressed a grin, and gave John an admiring look for his cleverness.

"Now what earthly reason does there exist for Mr. DeLaunay's interference in keeping this desperado in town? Why—"

"Cut the sermon short," said Hugh rising. "I see my time is wasted here. You will excuse me from remaining as I must finish this business before the steamer goes out to-night. My only intention in coming here was to enlist the influence of one whose word is justly powerful in Saranac. As for poor Amedée's stories I don't believe them any more than Mr. DeLaunay himself. Good-afternoon."

He went out abruptly convinced that after all the odium of being put in bonds to keep the peace must be borne by Amedée, who would not consider it a hardship; and the Captain must be the bondsman. He thought the DeLaunays took the affair pretty meanly. Generosity would not injure them; of course it was John's doing, and John had a point to make, a point which would not be benefited by the allusion to his father's hatred of his former partner. Hugh laughed to himself at that happy touch. It was something to make a lawyer pale, and turn his clients green in the very instant of triumph. They would hate him for it ever after, and Regina in particular would detest him. He had got to the gate by this, when Mrs. DeLaunay's imperious voice saluted him. She was sitting in a shaded arbor reading, and invited

him to enter. He accepted because of an instant resolve to try her influence in Amedée's behalf. It was a poor chance for every one knew the lady took small part in the affairs of her own household, never seemed to be intimate with her husband and daughter, appearing more the guest than the mother of the family. The Captain told her a very discreet story, and marvelled at its effect on her. A fire at once seemed to heat up her form; color in her face and ears and lips became juvenile; she threw aside the novel, a smile of hearty delight shone from her face, and her eyes sparkled red. Great heavens, thought the Captain, I hope this is not more trouble; but he went on with Amedée's story bravely.

"Certainly the poor man shall not leave Saranac," she said, and what a vibrant ring there was in her voice. "You just came from my husband and daughter and the lawyer. Let us go back to them. First, tell me are you convinced that this LaRoche is innocent?"

"I am," said the Captain.

"Could I ask if you are as certain of Mr. DeLaunay's guilt?"

He raised a warning hand.

"I see. You are on your honor. Well, let us go to the house."

The simple-hearted Captain never forgot that going to the house, and often compared it to the last scene in a play. It was really that, and as Mrs. DeLaunay had once been a successful and clever actress, she imported into the scene all the dash and intensity of a theatrical climax. When she walked into the parlor where the three still sat discussing the Captain's ec-

centricities, Mr. DeLaunay shrank into his chair and Regina grew breathless with terror; though her mother was smiling and self possessed and there was no evidence of a thunderbolt from that clear sky.

"My love," said she to her husband, "I am sorry to spoil all your plans, but really you must see to it that Amedée LaRoche remains in Saranac. Captain Sullivan has so interested me in that man's story that I could never rest easy if he did not die here, and give us all a chance to devote ourselves to him while he lives. What do you say?"

"Certainly, madame," gasped the husband, "as you say."

"Thanks. Captain, you can go home content. Mr. Winthrop, so sorry to spoil your clever plans. Regina, your dear papa and I will talk the matter over. Good-day, gentlemen."

Regina fled in a state of collapse to her room, and the men went away together, the lawyer shocked and mortified, the Captain nearly bursting with laughter at his friend's overthrow. Husband and wife were left alone in the parlor. Any one could understand that this was a case of vivisection, and that Mr. DeLaunay's escape was impossible.

CHAPTER XIX.

WINTHROP IN FAVOR.

The last days of the summer were days of terror to Regina, and nearly drove her to desperation. A new character had suddenly entered the household. Her mother in one hour had become so completely another person, that a second wife introduced by Mr. DeLaunay could hardly have created such a revolu-

tion. The woman that hitherto ruled the establishment had been a curious but ordinary creature, whose grand manner, languid airs, and polite nagging of her husband suggested a lurking scorn of her surroundings. She had never been the house-mother, anxious, foreseeing, nervous. The irritation of domestic cares, of training a girl to womanhood, of enduring the caprices of an elegant lord never seemed to reach her, or interest her. She found one thing as dull as another, one day the same as the preceding, and never occupied herself earnestly with any one but herself. She was really a cipher in the house, self elected to insignificance, and probably determined that no one should know anything about her. Once when Regina tried to register what she knew about her mother two facts alone presented themselves, that she liked novels and coffee. Mrs. DeLaunay might have dismissed these luxuries had she known.

In one hour this character, thanks to the stubborn spirit of Hugh Sullivan, had vanished like a ghost. Its substitute was not disagreeable, but it was intended to be. From insignificance Mrs. DeLaunay leaped to despotism, none the less felt that it was perfectly polite; from languor she passed to sprightliness; once bent on being bored, now she found pleasure in all things. Visitors would wonder what sort of a creature she was; it was easy enough at this moment to learn her good and bad qualities between breakfast and luncheon. Regina was terrified at the first exhibition of this new character. Her father from the hour he was left in the parlor with his wife remained in a state of stupor. The three met at dinner that evening. Mrs. DeLaunay was at her ease, and was

dressed in colors. There was a suspicion of rouge on her cheeks, her eyes sparkled, she smiled on her two relatives in Lady Teazle fashion, gay, bewitching, good-humored.

"You are too sober, Regina," she said. "Had I known as much about papa as you, I would have been quite mad with good spirits."

Regina never heard her father called papa before, and shuddered.

"But he had his secrets from you as well as from me," she went on with a charming glance at DeLaunay, "so that we are quite even. Only you must know the other secret also. You have no objection, my love," turning to her husband.

"None whatever," said he. "It will do the girl good to know us both well."

"Some time when I am not busy I shall tell you the story, Regina," she said. "It will supplement that which this LaRoche tells about your father. By the way, papa, is it all true?"

"Didn't Sullivan tell you," snapped DeLaunay, "of course it's true but you can't prove it."

"The culprit's confession proves it," his wife replied with a provoking smile. "You should be more careful, Howard. No, Captain Sullivan would tell me nothing. He was bound to silence, I inferred. All he would tell me was the common reports in the town."

Father and daughter exchanged glances.

"Even your shrewd lawyer, Regina, could not match the cleverness of the lake Captain. It was such a chance too! I sat in the arbor reading when he passed, quite discouraged by your refusal to do

anything. Then he came in and told me all. No novel I ever read could approach it. And it explained so much that had been mysterious to me. The way you two treated the Captain after the play last winter was shameful, but now it is explained. I must say you did not encourage him much to keep the secret."

"Regina wouldn't let me offer him money," said the father.

"Very sensible of her. I think Captain Sullivan does not keep secrets for money."

"I don't believe he kept it anyway," said Regina, "he must have told it to Mr. Winthrop."

"Hardly," replied the mother with a Lady Teazle glance, "these two young men will never exchange secrets again. You puzzle me, Regina. One time you encourage the Captain, another time it is the lawyer."

"I never encouraged either, mamma," with a deep and angry blush. "I am sure their behavior has never been loverlike."

"I wouldn't want either in the family," said De-Launay crossly. "They know too much about our affairs, particularly this d—ah, LaRoche."

"That reminds me," said Madame, "of what we must do for that most unfortunate young man. First, he must be invited here."

"Here," exclaimed the two in dismay.

"I admit it's not much of an honor for him," she answered much cast-down apparently, "but it will make an impression on the town. It will help to establish the man's good name. Funny isn't it, Howard, that an honest man's reputation can be restored by a visit to the gentleman who stole the money he was condemned for stealing. It's a queer world."

She reflected a few moments on the world's queerness while the others sat silent.

"I don't see what good can be done by such conduct," grumbled her husband.

"His good name," said she.

"What do these curs care for a good name?"

"Far more than silky terriers," said madame, "for it's all they have. But don't get irritable, Howard I shall find a way to do everything that will not jar your nerves. But you shall entertain this man before the whole world, and seat him at your right hand, and embrace him as a son when he is leaving. And Regina will play and sing and declaim for him, and smile upon him. You owe him reparation for your recent effort to keep him out of Saranac forever. That lost you Captain Sullivan's regard, Regina."

"I think, mamma, you are determined to make it disagreeable for papa and me," said Regina. "In which case I must get ready to visit New York."

"I could make it more disagreeable for you in New York, darling," said mamma coolly. "How would a column or two in the New York papers appear to your friends there, containing a complete account, with headlines, of Mr. DeLaunay's tricks fifteen years ago, the innocent man's return, and your presence in New York."

A heavy silence acknowledged the power of the threat.

"But then, dearest," mamma went on in her sweetest way, "don't think that I shall do anything to make you miserable. The road of reparation is not pleasant to the feet, but how stimulating to the moral nature!"

She laughed then at the despair of the two faces before her.

"Your moral nature needs stimulus," she said, "and hereafter I shall read to you daily a portion of Parker's sermons. I have neglected my duty in that respect, though not so far as to steal or injure a man's good name. Well, don't let me bore you, dears. Feel assured that I shall sugar-coat all the pills I insist upon your swallowing."

When dinner was over father and daughter fled from her to the refuge of his sitting-room. Regina implored him to tell her what influences could have changed her mother in a few hours from an ordinarily disagreeable person to a creature so vengeful and ill-tempered.

"I have had the upper hand of her for years," said DeLaunay, "but we have changed places now. That's all, Regina, upon my word. She is now the mistress of this house and the boss, if I may use that terrible word. Put a beggar on horseback, and you know where he will ride. Not that your awful mother was ever anything but a princess. You want me to explain how we came to change positions? Well, I think she can tell the story better. I have quite forgotten it, but it's as fresh in her memory as new paint. Oh, what a life is in store for us hereafter."

He dropped his cigar and groaned in real anguish.

"She must be restrained somehow," Regina said desperately. "Our lives are not too happy that more misery should come into them. Can you suggest anything, papa?"

"Hear her story first, Regina, and then *you* may think of something. *I* am helpless."

There was no doubt of it. "What a home," she said, as she went out into the garden to suffer alone the melancholy that oppressed her. The soft night was not lighted by moon or stars, a haze hung between earth and sky, and the bold light on the distant point shone strongly over the lake. A restless and fretful wind had the water sighing heavily along the shore. Regina listened to it with tears, and thought of the pure and peaceful homes about her where sin and discord had never found hospitality.

Her grief at the deficiencies of her own home began to tell upon her in spite of her strong pride. Her mother could not but see it.

Mrs. DeLaunay was not without some fraction of a mother's love, and was a woman of great generosity.

"I can see how troubled you are, dear, over our domestic trials," she said, "and I must show you how they can be used for your own happiness. You dream of making your father and me friendly once more. It is useless to think of it. It is unnecessary too. We have never been intimate or friendly, and it is too late to begin now, supposing we had the best of dispositions, which we haven't. But then we are old and sensible. We can observe the proprieties, and avoid becoming intolerable to each other; and you can go away—I mean by marriage of course—without fearing that we shall turn into wolves and eat each other up."

This language was so practical, and the tone so natural that for a moment Regina's face lighted up with hope.

"Is it really necessary," continued Madame, "that I should tell you all about your father from the be-

ginning, in order to explain why I admire him? No, of course not. I see that by your face. You know where he is now. He was never any worse. His whole life has been most respectable. But I can just hint at one trouble of many years back, and you can guess the rest. I was an actress, dear, and I notice you have some of my talent. I was gay, and foolish too in those days, and enjoyed life very much. Once your father caught me just as Sir Peter Teasle caught his young wife behind the screen; the worse for him perhaps that he knew my innocence as well as I did. He lorded it over me in his own peculiar way from that day until the moment Captain Sullivan told me a true story of him; the story told of me was false. That's all, dear. Don't let our selfish ways trouble you any more."

"If you would not do and say so many things to frighten one," said Regina

"Your papa is not frightened," Mrs. DeLaunay said placidly, "but he knows I will do and say startling things to the end of the chapter. As in plays they don't count. They never bring about any tragedies. You are so conservative they frighten you. You should get married, dear. It would be a way out of your troubles."

This quite took Regina's breath away, but she ventured to say:

"I was thinking of it."

"These slow Saranae boys," said her mother, "should have made you think more smartly long ago. Who would think Captain Sullivan and Mr. Winthrop had been dashing soldiers to see them making love. I would advise you to choose the Captain. He is the

less refined, but he is solid and simple-hearted. Then he has some piety, which in marriage is a great help to love. But Mr. Winthrop is a charming man, and much better suited to your disposition. Of course it's mostly a heart matter, very properly. You cannot do better than to follow your heart."

The conversation ended there for she did not take her mother into her confidence ; and scarcely to herself she mentioned the thoughts which from that day soothed and occupied her mind. John Winthrop would rejoice to be her deliverer. He was a gentleman by blood and training, a gallant soldier, a proud, patient wooer, a faithful friend. She had been struck with his devotion to the Captain. In the LaRoche matter they had been on opposite sides, and a natural and strong temptation to betray the contents of that letter must have beset Winthrop. Yet not a hint had once been breathed of Sullivan's heartless disregard of his solemn word. To console Winthrop for his recent defeat she thanked him for his consideration !

"I know, no matter how," she said, "that Captain Sullivan told you months ago of our scandal. He broke his word then, and he has broken it since in ways that would have justified even his friend in telling the truth about him. You have been silent. I think it was honorable and very kind."

"Thank you," stammered John, in great torture. The traitor praised for his fidelity ! The eulogy from Regina made him cold and faint.

CHAPTER XX.

A LAWN-PARTY.

Captain Sullivan after one visit to Amedée got a feeling of confidence in the regenerated exile. This confidence increased with the accounts that were regularly brought to him of Amedée's rise to mild affluence under the distinguished patronage of Mrs. DeLaunay. This lady made her appearance on the field at the moment her protégé was sufficiently recovered to present himself before the public as finely dressed as on his arrival in town. His appearance language, manner charmed and disappointed her.

"This is a gentleman," she thought, "where I looked for a picturesque rogue, rough enough to contrast well with my husband. There will not be much excitement developing him, unless he gets to smashing things again."

Briefly she offered in behalf of Mr. DeLaunay to furnish the money for any business that Amedée desired to take up; or to get him any position that his health and ability would permit him to accept; and it was to be well understood that the DeLaunays no longer looked upon him as an embezzler, but an honest and injured man.

"It would make too much trouble," she explained to Amedée, "to declare openly that a certain person stole the money and doctored the books, though I

would not object. But when you are asked about your share in the stealing, declare your innocence and refer to the three members of the DeLaunay family as authority."

Amedée thanked her, and said he would take time to select a business or a position. When he was ready he would let her know.

"And I would be pleased to know something more about you," she said. "You must have had some curious experiences in Texas. Call when you have time, and let us hear them from your own lips. Mr. DeLaunay would be so interested."

Amedée consented to call!

The certainty of restoration to public esteem gave him new life and purpose, which for a time served to conceal the ravages of dissipation and disease. He decided after a little thought to go into the dry goods business. It was light and agreeable, and the selection pleased his patroness who had expressed to John Winthrop a fear that it might be groceries. She had made Winthrop her agent. Amedée seemed reluctant to take her favors through John's willing hands; but he did not openly object, and the lawyer behaved with tact and true sympathy. The store was selected, the announcements made, the signs painted, the most dazzling array of town merchandise piled on the shelves. Saranac looked on, wondered and gossiped; Amedée's friends, and at that moment they were few, beamed with joy. Madame went once to look at the new place, and walked home in ecstasy, after leaving a bouquet and many grateful tears with delighted Mrs. Sullivan. LaRoche however avoided the place

from a sad presentiment that Amedee would wreck the establishment within a month and create a scandal whose history would be a Saranac laugh for years. Even in his dreams the anxious pilot saw the mainstreet strewn with calicoes, muslins, ribbons and underwear, and heard the shrieks of his drunken son, even as Tim Grady, with fatal attention to detail described them to him. Every morning of his arrival in Saranac he looked suspiciously into the faces of the dock loungers, dreading to see there the news of an outbreak.

Tim Grady saw Amedée take possession of his place of business one August morning, and stood with prophetic, sarcastic grin across the street while the goods were uncovered to the light. It was the prettiest store in the town; already its proprietor was showing that his native cleverness had not left him, and that he had used his travels to some purpose. In time all Saranac was there to see and to buy, but at the opening hour Mr. Grady had the spectacle to himself. His godson paid him no attention. Tim was compelled to utter his prophecy to the air.

"If inside o' wan month," said Mr. Grady to the sweet morning, "this gossoon hasn't aten every bit o' cloth in his shtore, I'm willin' to hang meself higher than Haman, I'm that sure of it. But it's a fine shtore anyhow."

This praise was not uttered in a spirit of admiration, but of bitter delight at the prospect of the destruction Amedée would inflict upon it. Mr. Grady was furious with his godson and with Hugh Sullivan. They had beaten him, routed him, triumphed over him, and now would not so much as admit they had fought with him.

"Ah, thin the day'll come," said Mr. Grady, "whin I'll be sought for to capthur this divil in wan ov his tantrums, an' I won't be found."

A remark that meant that Saranac would be at the mercy of the demoniac until he came to his senses or was shot; Mr. Grady would not lift a hand to save an ungrateful people. While Tim stood watching the store David Winthrop came along.

"I'd give something, Tim Grady," he said, "to know why the DeLaunays started this young rascal in business. They're not interested in it, are they, do you know?"

"They're not," replied Tim, "an' if ye want to know why they've done so much for Amedée, I'll tell ye for nothin'; an' ye can save yer few dollars. Amedée says ould DeLaunay shtole the money that was laid to his door; which ye know already; but can ye prove it? Ye know ye can't. 'Pon me sowl I don't belave a word of it. There's somethin' deeper in the thing. That divil knows a secret maybe that won't stan' daylight an' the DeLaunays *have* to help him. But the shtore'll go down. Not a sowl that I know will thrade in it. Whin there's no thrade, there's no money. Whin there's no money Amedée will take to dhrink again, an' smash everything to bits. Mind I'm tellin' ye four weeks ahead, and ye can witness I tould ye."

"Bad trade-prophet," said Winthrop.

"I'm no prophet," said Tim. "I'm tellin' what I see, an what you kin see if ye want to."

"Humbug! Tell me something I can't know myself or find out, or guess at. Any man can do what you're doing, Tim Grady, and you needn't pride yourself on your superior foresight."

Grady retired muttering. He had become in one fashion an enemy of his godson. The failure of Amedée to remain in Texas and die of drink, his success in resisting Saranac public opinion which Tim had manufactured, and finally his impudent bid for the patronage of decent people to maintain him in business had seriously irritated the old man, whose forecasts had thus been all overthrown. The more frequent his failures in prophecy the more violently he prophesied Amedée must take to drink before a month, throw his wares into the street, and a third time disgrace himself in the eyes of Saranac. He was bent on bringing the disaster to pass. He would not have admitted such a charge even to himself, and been horrified to hear it from others. He argued it was a mistake to let Amedée escape from Texas, and a danger to keep him in Saranac. Good sense and charity required that so hopeless a case be returned to the place of his exile; to bring this about the new store must prove a failure; Mr. Grady was ready to do all in his power to make it a failure. He succeeded fairly. Saranac agreed with him that Amedée was a hopeless case, impudent, and untrustworthy. It could not resist a natural curiosity to see the new place and its wild proprietor. For a week the store was thronged with the curious, not with buyers. Then a great desolation fell upon it, and for days not a shopper entered, with the exception of Mrs. Sullivan and a few others. Mr. Grady kept tally of these, and reported to his cronies. He ventured even to remonstrate with Mrs. Sullivan, and was roundly scolded for his impertinence. Amedée was not at all discouraged until the cause of his ill-success became known. It was

natural a new business should be slow in developing. Six months was not too long to wait for a small trade, and he was happy. But it daunted him to hear at last that Saranac had made up its mind to avoid him because he was a suspicious and dangerous character, and should be in Texas. This was not giving a man a fair chance. He consulted with John Winthrop, and that shrewd gentleman put him on the track of Tim Grady. The situation had in the end to be put before Mrs. DeLaunay.

"The town will not go to Amedée," said she. "Then let Amedée go to the town."

But Tim Grady was in the way for both parties. Was Mr. Grady unmanageable? He was. Then let me think for a few days, said she.

It looked as if Mr. Grady would have to be conciliated, and for a moment she might have entertained this scheme; but only for a moment; since on inquiry she found that Mr. Grady was acting from a spirit of hateful pride, ambitious to have his opinion of Amedée prevail in Saranac in spite of Hugh Sullivan and the great family of the town. Then Regina's mother resolved that the exile should be exalted and the pitiless godfather disgraced in the same moment before all Saranac; and it was to be a social and official occasion which would thus set the seal of honor upon one, of shame upon the other. The means were ready to her hand. She invited her meek husband to ride with her one morning. It was early in September, and very pleasant weather; very pleasant indeed, Saranac folk thought, to see the pair out together alone. They drove to the priest's house and entered, DeLaunay being most uneasy since he did not doubt

she would insist on his going to confession, for the first time in a quarter of a century.

"I have come to ask a favor," Mrs. DeLaunay said, "and I ask it on the strength of my husband being in some sort a Catholic. I notice that the Catholic ladies raise money for the Church by giving entertainments at their own houses. I would like to give one in mine, and if you consent, I promise you it will be the most pleasant and successful you have ever had."

"Not a doubt of it," said the priest, "but are you aware of all the difficulties in getting up an affair of this kind. Some people would be ashamed to visit a fine house and make merry there. Others might refuse to help towards making it a success. Others again —"

"I can assure you, Father McManus," she interrupted pleasantly, "that the whole town will be there. The poorest will be supplied with courage. Mr. DeLaunay is a politician, and can win the heart of the district voter. I am not afraid of the women but that I can capture them. Give me *carte blanche*, announce it from the altar Sunday for Tuesday night, and leave us to do all the rest."

"There will be no failure," said Mr. DeLaunay with a little warmth.

"Thanks," said the priest. "I give you all powers for the affair. Such help comes in a good time, and we cannot be too thankful for it."

"Did you not feel somewhat Catholic," said Mrs. DeLaunay as they drove off, "in having your wife thus volunteer to do the church some service?"

"I've lost interest in the church," growled he, "it's

a corporation of big promises and small performances."

"No doubt of it," she answered, with such a look at him that he wilted. She seemed to take him as one of the performances.

A murmur went through Saranac when it was made known that the first social of the season would be held at the grand mansion. Several democratic noses were turned heavenward at the mere mention of it, but they soon turned to the horizon again. The affair was not to be confined to kid gloves and silk stockings, but to be as open as a town-meeting or a picnic. In her twenty years of residence in Saranac Mrs. DeLaunay had never been seen on the streets so often as on the five days before Sunday. She visited every family in the place, and secured not only donations of cake, pie, ice cream, sugar, milk, coffee, meats, and other delicacies, but the promises of the matrons and their daughters to attend without fail, if they stayed no longer than a half-hour. She made up her managing committees from all classes of women, and so mingled them that Mrs. DeKoven's wash-woman was that lady's chief assistant in managing the ice cream department. Everybody that was anybody had an office, and Regina was authorized to organize a minstrel show with the aid of the native young men. Mr. DeLaunay secured the man to decorate and illuminate the grounds, and with great earnestness invited every voter he knew to attend. The bunting was bought of Amedée, and the DeLaunay carriage stopped at his store many times a day. In fact but for this incident he would have been forgotten in the excitement which prevailed. Mrs. DeLaunay took

up Tim Grady in her carriage one day, and drove him through the streets as if he were a prime minister and she the queen. He helped her out and helped her in with the airs of a Kerry cavalier of the last century ; and she talked and smiled him into such a mood that he would have fought the constable for her. She made him the master of the revels for the social, or in Saranac language, the "bouncer."

"You know everyone," said she, "and you must know how to manage them if they get troublesome. Now, if you would be so kind as to take charge of the whole place after seven o'clock, it would be such an honor to us."

Mr. Grady fairly swelled with admiration of himself as this distinction was conferred on him. He knew it was more than deserved. He felt that in all the town not a man could be compared with him for knowledge of ancient history and local characters, nevertheless he bowed to the superior discernment and wonderful gifts of this woman, so exclusive, so proud, so stern, who recognized in him the proper person to keep order in the grounds, to secure dignity and decorum for the festival, to—to—but his imagination failed to discover anything more to do for Mrs. DeLaunay's social.

The preparations were at last completed to the infinite relief of Regina and her father, long since wearied by the work assigned them. The Mistress was still as fresh as at the beginning. It was like rehearsing a play, only more interesting. In seven days she had learned more of Saranac than in twenty years of residence, a fact which determined her to make "the social" a feature of her life every year. Her

tact was great, her manner winning ; she had her own way in all the quiet bickering that took place among the women, settling all difficulties with ease and success. The entire town was interested in her festival, for she had made it the people's. After all it was only the setting of the scene which had so far been prepared. The properties had been gathered. The actors were yet to appear, and the play to be produced. She smiled grimly in advance at Tim Grady's coming humiliation, which to her mind was pleasanter than the elevation of Amedée. Mr. Grady was at the gate before seven, and saw to the lighting of the lanterns. He was knocked about some by the men, who had not heard of his appointment to the bouncership, and resented his dictation. It was a long time before he could persuade anyone of his authority, and then the place was so crowded that authority amounted to nothing.

It was a lovely night of course, for Mrs. DeLaunay had arranged that also, as she informed her husband. The lanterns were thick enough to make the lawn bright as day. The grand house was thrown open to all that came, and tents scattered about the grounds held entertainments of various sorts for the guests. In one was a Punch-and-Judy show, in another refreshments, a third was for dancing, and here the minstrels were to perform under Regina's management. Tim Grady rushed about among these places with great zeal, and displayed his authority to the proprietors. He was everywhere received with doubt, denial, and rebuff. He was not discouraged for Saranac crowds were ready with rebuffs. His appeal to Mrs. DeLaunay for moral support was answered by

an order from her to John Winthrop to see that everyone acknowledged Tim. She was in earnest, but Saranac perversely took Grady's appointment as a joke, and made the old gentleman perspire that evening as never before. Only the most indifferent or the feeble ancknowledged his authority, and the rows that occurred in consequence were numerous and funny.

The lady of the house spent the early evening receiving her guests in the drawing-room, to which ushers conducted every person that came, Mrs. DeLaunay assisted, so did Regina and the priest of the parish. When Amedée appeared the mistress kept him at her left hand while the reception was going on, to the astonishment of Saranac. To appear before this group at one end of the long room was very trying for the farmers' boys and the railroad men, but its novelty and distinction gave them courage: and very proud they were of the feat when they reached the lawn again. No one forgot the spectacle of Amedée LaRoche standing with these distinguished people, and suffering nothing, rather gaining by the contrast. His appearance was striking yet gentlemanly. He was at ease with those who had wronged him. Saranac admired the scene. And the exile went up a shade in common estimation. It was his festival as his patroness intended. He was the star for whom the scenery and the beautiful properties and the fine company, and the splendid audience had been provided; Mrs DeLaunay was the good genius, and Tim Grady was the villain whose downfall was to be compassed that night. The first act ended with the reception. Certainly no first act ever presented a

star so thoroughly to an audience as the reception did Amedée. Every soul in the place talked for ten minutes of the scene in the drawing-room. Ten minutes is a long time for one subject at a lawn party.

The leading actors were well drilled, so that the first impression was preserved and deepened. The reception ended, Father McManus showed Amedée over the grounds at Mrs. DeLaunay's request and to his own delight, for Amedée was telling him interesting stories of Texan life. The whole world saw the priest and the exile arm in arm for a good half-hour, saw them visit the shows and eat ice cream together, saw the priest laugh his heartiest at the bright stories Amedée was telling. At the end of their tour in some delightful way Amedée was transferred to the charge of Regina, and brought to the card-room to take part in a game of progressive euchre with three tables. The whole Saranac world passed the card room not excepting Tim Grady, already quite exhausted with his efforts to be seen on the occasion. He had heard of the reception scene, he had met the priest in Amedée's company, and this third view of his godson's glory was gall to his soul. He stood on the gravel walk and watched the players at the window. Regina's voice came floating out to him like the tones of a flute.

"You play remarkably well, Mr. LaRoche. How fortunate to have you for a partner."

"He ought to play well," growled Tim, "after twenty years gamblin' wid other people's money. He'll chate the eyes out ov 'em, if they don't take care."

A slippery-looking young man just then entered

the card-room, and sat down quietly. It was Mr. Grady's opportunity, and he rushed in after him.

"Here, you," he said in a tone that caught attention from all present, "this is no place for the likes ov yez. Be aff now, if ye want to keep out o' jail to-night."

The slippery young man reclined defiantly in his chair, and smiled at this order. Mr. Grady made a grab for his shoulder, but found his own arms seized from behind, and himself placed as courteously as rapidity would permit on the gravel walk without.

"No rows here, Grady," said the gentlemen as they left him. He looked back at the card-room. The game was going on placidly, and the slippery-looking young man had vanished. Mr. Grady actually swore at his go'ison, and the few spectators laughed!

At half past nine the minstrels gave their performance in the dancing tent. Six hundred people found seats in it, somewhat crowded of course. An enclosure at one side of the orchestra was the box for distinguished visitors. A minute before the curtain rose Mrs. DeLaunay and Father McManus walked down the aisle, and took their seats in the box. A moment later Mr. DeLaunay and Amedée followed them. Dumb show has its effect on the crowd. The lady bowed to Amedée, and the priest offered Mr. DeLaunay his seat. It was refused with a bow, while Amedée pushed forward an arm chair. Again Mr. DeLaunay refused, and insisted on Amedée taking it himself. Saranac held its breath, and then murmured in approbation. Mr. Grady snorted, and impelled by the evil spirit which annoyed him all that evening seized a small boy eating offensive peanuts and tried

to eject him. The boy howled and held to his seat, there was some hustling in the crowd for an instant, and then Mr Grady was elbowed and pushed into the open air without the boy and without a chance of getting back into the tent. It was exasperating to say the least. He revenged himself upon the few in-offensive souls still wandering about the grounds.

The minstrel show ended in a short half hour, and then the dancing began. In those days the Lancers was a dance rarely seen in country towns, where it is now as common as the cotillion. It was the first dance on the programme and only eight persons appeared to execute it. Saranac people were excited over its performance, and, in the merry confusion that preceded the clearing of the floor, discussed it earnestly. Mr. Grady, seeking an opportunity to distinguish himself, joined in the talk with a view to decry the Lancers. The experienced laughed at his reasoning and his statements.

"'Tis nothin' to the minuet," he declared. "An' I'll lave it to Mrs. DeLaunay, who med me boss o' the grounds this night, if it ain't so."

"Who's goin' to trouble the lady about such a thing," said one. "LaRoche can tell us. He's one of the eight for the Lancers."

"What's that," exclaimed Tim in a falsetto of anguish and surprise. "Amedée LaRoche dance anythin' but a Virginia reel! Wan o' the eight! What lies yez can be invintin'."

"See for yourself," said the other, as the floor began to clear for the dancing. Mr. Grady looked and saw Amedée in a group at the upper end of the room. The sight made him sick to despair, and without con-

sidering the risk he ran and the attention he drew upon himself, he stumped up to Mrs. DeLaunay in high indignation and cried out so that all heard and grew still to listen:

"Is it for you, ma'am, to demane yourself by lettin' that boccagh, LaRoche, into the same set with ye before the whole world, whin I an' every wan knows he can't put one shtep behind the other in—"

Mrs. DeLaunay looked at him an instant coldly, then turned her back to him and walked away as only an adept in stage action could do such a thing, while at the same moment two ushers fell upon him and were prevented from removing him on'y by the order of the priest standing near.

"Mr. Grady," said the pastor severely, heard by all present, "you have forgotten the first principles of gentlemanliness by this conduct. You have insulted the mistress of the house, and openly attacked one of her guests, a gentleman whom we honor, and whose presence here is a pleasure to all. There is nothing you can do more agreeable to the guests than to leave at once; don't delay to make apologies for they are not desired."

Mr. Tim Grady was unable to reply, and as before he was led rapidly away by the ushers and placed on the street this time with his face to the town. He stood there some minutes weeping over his humiliation. The sound of music came out to him like a mocking spirit. He was on the road, while his worthless godson was once more astonishing Saranac folk by leading the Lancers with Mrs. DeLaunay for a partner. Who would believe it? That this broken down and riotous Texan could dress, comport himself, and

dance as tastefully and gracefully as the Saranac aristocracy! Mr. Grady went home filled with bitterness. The next day the town would ring with the story of his humiliations, and with praise of his godson. Why, if this lawn party, intended to aid the treasury of the parish, had been specially arranged for his shame and Amedée's honor it could not have been managed better. He never knew how exactly this guess hit the truth, or how gaily Mrs. DeLaunay went through the Lancers with her Texan partner, certain that her play was a great success; that the minor villain had been punished in measure, the major villian, her husband, properly punished, and justice in small part done to the gentle and unfortunate exile!

CHAPTER XXI.

THE WEDDING.

Madame LaRoche was a practical woman, and could transact domestic business with speed and profit. Blessed with a strong mind, a vigorous faith, and a Canadian training she never saw reason for losing courage, never lost a penny in trade, and worked in her seventy-fifth year with as firm hope and wide horizon as if she were but fifty. While Amedée and Mrs. DeLaunay were striving to get a good trade for the new business, Madame had quietly and innocently prepared a scheme which brought her son again into the public eye under most favorable conditions. He did not need further attention after the lawn party. Saranac flocked to his store with cash and sympathy, and laughed at the extinction of Tim

Grady, now in the retirement of a sick room to avoid public ridicule. Madame's scheme was purely domestic. Amedée must wed. He was *un vieux garçon*, a character not respected among Canadians; he was still in danger from his drinking habits; a good wife was necessary for him, to whose loving care and sweet companionship he might be safely intrusted. From the moment Captain Sullivan had made Amedée's stay in Saranac a certainty Madame had continued her efforts to find for her boy a suitable wife.

She had many difficulties to contend with. Her son was in consumption, had a bad record, had disgraced himself twice in Saranac. and was not then doing well in business. Mr. Narcisse McCarthy, for whose daughter she asked most humbly, stated these objections very forcibly, and refused to consider the matter. But Madame, having a hold on Mr. McCarthy, persisted.

"It is clear," she said, "that Amedée will live many years, if he has a good wife to care for him. It is not quick consumption he has. Mon Dieu, no! If it were, he would have been dead long ago. He never stole the money, as was said. Mr. DeLaunay himself declared him innocent. If he drank a little once, he is now quite temperate; and how many, even you, yourself, get drunk in public and lose nothing by it, when they are usually temperate men. The business is poor just now, I know. But is it not only a commencement? What will it not be a year from this. Then do not forget, Mr. McCarthy, that Elizabeth is thirty three, and her chance of marriage is gone."

"We Irish don't mind that," said Monsieur McCarthy.

"Then they love each other," said Madame.

"Truly," he replied, "since his return she has wept often, and lost her appetite and sleep. After refusing everyone for fifteen years, for his sake, no wonder she should be excited. But they have not met, and he has not asked for her."

"He thinks she is married," said Madame. "Poor faithful girl! will you for scruples leave her heartsore all her life."

Monsieur McCarthy shook his head soberly and refused to talk further about the matter until he could think over it. He was by birth and training a Canadian, but his Irish mother had died in the cabin of a charitable *hab tant*, and left him to be baptized and cared for by the same kind-hearted souls. They named him Narcisse, gave him a place among their own children, and loved *le petit Irlandais* all the more that he was of another race and an orphan. Narcisse was therefore as much a Canadian as Madame, and while rejoicing in his paternity loved and practiced the customs in which he had been educated; nor was he one whit less eager than Madame to turn every circumstance to his daughter's profit in the negotiations which now began. He had watched Amedée carefully since his entrance into business and he had come to some conclusions. The exile had a business that in time would pay handsomely, and his daughter had a talent for it; Amedée was likely to remain a sober man for the rest of his days, and if consumption finally carried him off, it would not be until his wife had become acquainted with the busi-

ness and had secured from him a will in her favor. His objections to Madame were, therefore, only the necessary preliminaries to large demands on behalf of his daughter, and he speedily allowed himself to be inveigled into her kitchen for another talk on the union of the two houses.

"How is Mademoiselle Elizabeth," said Madame, with an assumption of calmness she did not feel, for Amedée's business was still doing poorly.

"I need not tell you," replied Monsieur McCarthy sadly, "I am even getting anxious about her. She still weeps in secret. She cannot eat or sleep, and my wife is alarmed; only yesterday we thought of sending her to our son in Wisconsin."

"Heavens," cried Madame, "have you the heart? and you knowing why she grieves so! These two were made for each other. It is very clear. After fifteen years God brings them together again. It would be a sin to separate them. If you do, she will surely die."

"It would be awful to lose her," said Monsieur McCarthy, who had not the slightest fear of such a calamity, "and we had arranged to leave her the house and the bank-book when God took us. If she should die, it would all go to the boys, and they have enough except that good-for-nothing Tom, who swallows money like a whale. He can never get enough. But until we die Elizabeth has nothing but three hundred dollars her aunt gave her."

"And you would provide the wedding-feast, would you not?" said Madame, suddenly perceiving that Monsieur McCarthy was sniffing at a bargain.

"Are we talking of marriage?" he cried angrily

"What! Give my daughter to a consumptive, who will die in a few years! It is true he has a good business, but a widow gets only one-third, the relatives take the rest, unless there be children, and when a business is broken up one third is nothing."

"True, but Amedée could make a will. *We* want nothing. We shall leave him what we have, and fit up his house for him. Oh, everything, Monsieur McCarthy, must go to this good Elizabeth, who has waited for my son fifteen years, and is faithful to him even after his bad conduct. You will provide the wedding-feast, Monsieur?"

"It is but a trifle," he answered with delight. "But how do we know your son will care to marry, and then to leave all to his wife? If his brothers should hear of it, and object—"

"Monsieur McCarthy, I promise you—oh, how happy you have made me—there shall be no trouble. His brothers and sisters have nothing to do with Amedée, —until now they have been ashamed of him. When the day of the marriage comes he shall give Elizabeth a will for her and her children, I shall fit up a house for them, she will bring him her auntie's gift, and you will provide the wedding-feast. Is it agreed, Monsieur McCarthy?"

"It is agreed," said he.

"This is Saturday," continued Madame. "Tuesday is the lawn-party at Madame DeLaunay's. Then to-morrow evening do you and your wife and my dear Elizabeth come here to tea. It is LaRoche's Sunday home. In one hour we can arrange everything. Ah," cried Madame rolling her eyes towards the little altar, "the good God is doing everything for me like the

stories in the books, which are mostly too good to be true."

"It is indeed like a story," said Monsieur McCarthy, as he went thoughtfully homeward.

It was all arranged very prettily. Coming home from Mass on Sunday Madame LaRoche called her son's attention to two women walking a few yards ahead of them. They were evidently mother and daughter, the former stout and rheumatic, the latter graceful in form, well-dressed, and beyond her youth. Her profile, occasionally in view, showed a pensive but cheerful expression. Amedée did not know them.

"Do you not remember Elisabeth," she said in a low tone.

He started, turned pale, then grew calm again and laughed at his own emotion.

"She is now married, I suppose," he said carelessly.

"She has refused many offers these fifteen years for your sake, my son." He grew pale again. "She is still waiting for you, and loves you enough to wed with you."

He started forward, but his mother held his arm, alarmed at his great pallor.

"Not here," she said, "too many are near and there would be a scene. To-night I have invited them to take tea with us. I have spoken with her father, and we have managed everything. You have nothing to do but ask on your own account."

"But why should she think of me a poor good-for-nothing," he began.

"She weeps every night for you," said his mother.

"She is almost sick waiting to meet you and speak to you. Never have I known a more faithful heart! And she has never spoken your name to others since you left."

"My faithful girl," cried Amedée, and the silent tears fell from his eyes. "How good God has been to me! Oh, that I had a few years to live and thank Him for His goodness!"

Madame sighed and smiled together, as with loving, furtive eye she studied the traces of disease in his face. Prosperity had already removed them in great part; success in business and conjugal love would surely restore him a few of his lost years. In any event Madame felt that justice and mercy in full measure had been given to her, and she left the future to God. A wedding in a few weeks was a fact to thrill the oldest heart, particularly with Monsieur McCarthy so generous as to provide the wedding dinner, and permit Elisabeth to depart from his house with her three hundred dollars. What more could *un vieux garçon* with Amedée's unfortunate history expect or desire! The meeting of the long parted lovers was simple and touching. They shook hands politely, leaving their eyes to speak the feelings of the heart. In a quiet way Madame sent off her husband to walk along the shore with Monsieur Narcisse, and took Mrs. McCarthy, an aggressive character who spoke *patois* with a frightful brogue, into the best room for a short gossip; so that no human eyes saw the real meeting of Amedée and Elisabeth, who were able to take their places afterward at the tea table without agitation and to conduct themselves like ordinary persons.

When the excitement over the lawn party had sub-

sided the news of his daughter's approaching marriage was sent forth by Monsieur Narcisse. In a measure her failure to wed had irritated him more than her devotion to a defaulter; he took the greater pleasure in announcing her nuptials with the owner of a handsome business and the most popular man in town. Captain LaRoche spread the news among his friends and relatives.

"Old McCarthy's daughter," he said to his relations; "she will have everything her father and mother leave behind."

To his American friends who smilingly observed "She's Irish, isn't she?"

"Oh, yes," he answered complacently, "Amedée is to marry 'li'l' Irish girl."

This fact was a source of pride to him, since not even the cleverest Canadian boys could overcome, except in rare instances, Irish distrust of Canadian nature. Amedée himself bore the news to his patroness, and the invitation to attend the wedding at the church.

"Why not at the house too," she asked.

"I am afraid our customs would hardly suit your tastes," he replied frankly.

"I shall invite myself then, and if the bride has no objections Regina shall be second bridesmaid. By the way I hope you have chosen one who will be an ornament to your new business."

"It was all very sudden," he explained. "Sunday evening my mother arranged the affair, and I had no time to consult you. It is an old affair. I was engaged to her before I went to Texas, but I gave her up then, and supposed she had married long ago. Only

Sunday morning I heard she was still unmarried on my account. We are to be married next Wednesday."

"Charming," said Mrs. DeLaunay. "No romance could have ended more properly. You are really a wonderful man, Amedee LaRoche, in the gift you possess of surprising and delighting your friends. But this dear girl—Genevieve—"

"Elizabeth," he corrected,

"Elizabeth Rosette, I suppose—"

"McCarthy."

"Oh! well, that's better. Her looks now, I trust—"

"She is old waiting for me," he said drawing a packet from his bosom; "but this is how she looked fifteen years ago, and this is her appearance now"

The lady examined the photographs with interest.

"Better and better," she said. "I shall love that girl. I must borrow those for a few hours to show them to my daughter. How is the business these two days."

"Simply wonderful! Since the lawn-party everything has changed."

"Do you feel now that we are doing a little to make up for those awful years you spent in Texas?"

"I do not think you could do more. Texas seems like a bad dream now a-days."

"You are easily satisfied," she said. "Some natures—" she was thinking of her own—"would not take any reparation short of—"

She did not care to put the idea of revenge in his mind by finishing with "an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth," but he understood the ellipsis and said:

"We cannot be less kind than God, who is content with reparation."

"That is a noble thought," she answered in bid-

ding him good morning ; and she repeated the saying to Regina, who received it and the news of Amedée's marriage coldly. Against acting as bridesmaid she protested mildly.

" Really, mamma, you are making us very singular by your petting of this man. I wish you would not require me to parade so often in his company. *We* cannot keep it up, though you may."

" After the petting your father gave him for fifteen years, you need not fear he will be spoiled," was the sharp reply. " Nor will people call your parading as singular as your willingness to keep an innocent man out of his rights forever."

The tears rushed from the girl's eyes, for the plain words cut deeply into her pride. She had been guilty of this sin.

" Now it happens that Elizabeth McCarthy is a very nice and refined creature, whose marriage will end a real romance ; so that you will do yourself honor by being her bridesmaid. Then John Winthrop is to be chief usher, and Captain Sullivan best man. Your papa will be my escort, and some wealthy friends of the old pilot are to be present. You will be surrounded by your own atmosphere, Regina, and the plebeian air will not reach you."

There was nothing to do but obey, but the dictatorial mistress was not to have the pleasure of her husband's escort to the church ; he had heard the brief talk with Regina, and that afternoon stole away to Montreal on an evening train, determined at any cost to humble himself no more before Amedée. Mrs. DeLaunay felt the more bound to torture her daughter for his absence.

Of the wedding Regina remembered nothing but the feast. She never forgot that groaning board. Everything was put on the table at once, although the order of courses was strictly observed. The parents of the bride and groom, whose plates Regina could not but see, filled their dishes with potatoes, cabbage, turkey, dressing, cranberry sauce, mashed turnips, and gravy; renewed the supply; ate apple-pie and cream-pudding in quantities, and made away with cup after cup of strong tea or coffee. There were forty persons in the rooms, and with few exceptions they excelled the eating powers of the parents. There was no hurry or noise. All were merry enough. Still the table was cleared in a half-hour, for these work-people lose no time in idle conversation at meals, and have fine teeth.

Monsieur McCarthy made a speech with three points and a climax: he was proud of his daughter, he was proud of her husband, he was proud of this day, which he hoped would be often repeated! The pilot, taking cue from this, repeated the three points, but avoided the climax by sitting down in the middle of a sentence. They toasted Regina, who nodded to John Winthrop to reply for her, and Mrs. DeLaunay, who made Captain Sullivan her spokesman. It was John who won the honors for what Monsieur McCarthy called a "spick-span-speech," but the Captain said the words which touched the occasion and stirred the hearts of the guests.

"I never thought a year ago I could sit at the wedding-dinner of Amed  e, and help eat his pie and turkey in such company. It's quite like a story in a paper. But it's true, and I'm glad of it. Only a good boy could have all these strange things happen to

him, and come out all right, with so many friends to help him. Last year he was in Texas, and no one knew anything about him, except that he was going to die there in a poor way. To-day his good wife is at his side forever, he has a first-class business, and among his many friends you can put down Mrs. DeLaunay—I speak by her permission—and myself as the warmest, though we never knew him till this year. Only God could have fixed him so well, but He had a good, foolish, honest boy to deal with. Amedée has left all his folly in Texas, and I hope to see him prosper as long as he lives.”

CHAPTER XXII.

A REVELATION.

The wedding ended sensations in Saranac. Amedée's business prospered. Mr. Grady came forth from his obscurity and resumed his historical contests with Mrs. Sullivan. The DeLaunays went back into haughty seclusion. The autumn frosts, cold rains, and Indian Summer gave the village folk enough to talk about after they had tired of Amedée, and his adventures. Thanksgiving was near, and Christmas not distant, and the wail of the turkey was heard in every barnyard. Regina was thinking of getting married. Her thoughts had changed from the prosaic to the poetic, for it was her habit to idealize the important events and persons of her life as she had idealized her father and Captain Sullivan. Her mistakes in connection with the character of these two gentlemen had not cured her of an agreeable habit. When it first occurred to her that marrying with John Win-

throp would rescue her from an intolerable house, she had thought of the union as a mere matter of business. In time it became more agreeably an affair of sentiment, almost of the heart.

Never was there a more courteous or delicate lover than Winthrop. He had made it evident that his whole life was at her service without doing any more or saying any more than the dryest of advocates. But what could be more delicate than his conduct of the affair with Amedée! And how generously he insisted on believing in her father's innocence, which saved her a world of humiliation. How faithfully he had kept the Captain's dishonor to himself! She would have despised him had he been less faithful to that unworthy Damon. His moral virtues were the more acceptable that their owner had fine taste in dress, white hands, a handsome face, and a ready, witty tongue. He would be a judge some day, he would always be an agreeable companion. He loved her to foolishness, and yet—she paused. He had never waked in her that interest—she called it interest for want of a better word—which Hugh had won for himself, who did not belong to her circle, as the lawyer did. If husband of hers ever used such vulgarities as were easy to Hugh, she would be ashamed of him. Winthrop was never vulgar, never offensive, and yet—. What was the difference between this regard and that? Could it be that one had the element of love, which the other was without? Or was it merely that, because her heart for a moment had turned to Hugh Sullivan, she found it difficult or humiliating to offer it to another? She could not determine. But John Winthrop at all events was

one man of a thousand, and if her life were to be spent with him she might be grateful to Providence.

Her father had suddenly set his heart on her marriage to Winthrop and spoke seriously to her. She listened without displeasure, and with some amusement. It was his own comfort he was seeking.

"It will be so pleasant, Regina, to have your home to take refuge in from your devil of a mother; I beg pardon, I meant to say only tiresome. I am altogether cooped now. She permits no flights to Montreal, or any other places without knowledge, permission, time-limit, and conduct report. It's like going to school again. Now with you in your own house much of this awful behavior would disappear. Your marriage would make it very pleasant for us all, except for old David, who has no love for the DeLau-nays. I wouldn't mind him."

"Don't you find mamma easier these few weeks," said Regina referring to a fact which had surprised her.

"Her eyes pierce me, I can never be easy again while she can look at me. She has very fine eyes, Regina, but they are uncomfortable. I would like to be out of their range once or twice a week, and if you married John Winthrop I could get relief. Winthrop is a decent fellow in spite of old David; the only decent boy in town I believe, and he has a fortune. You should think of him, Regina. I hope you're not thinking of anyone else."

"I am really not thinking at all, papa."

"Well, begin, my dear. It's time. If you get too sensible you will be sure to marry not at all."

After the wedding John had withdrawn himself somewhat from her company, but had promptly accepted all invitations sent him, and used them judiciously. He had a pleasant feeling as the weeks passed, that for the first time in his courting the advantage was his, and Captain Sullivan was out of the race. He labored hard to improve that advantage, and the elder DeLaunays helped him. Meanwhile Regina went on idealizing. Someone gave her a vivid account of his war record, and showed her a photograph of the brave soldier in uniform; another described his brilliant college course, his high sense of honor, his noble disposition. Saranac folk knew and loved him well. It was not difficult for her to feel a deep enthusiasm over him after a time, when she had mounted him finally on a pedestal high enough to satisfy her notion of idolatry. From that moment John Winthrop had only to throw himself at her feet to be accepted; but as he did not dream of success so near the declaration was delayed, until several events had intervened.

The first of these was the sickness of Amedée. Mrs. DeLaunay brought the news one evening a few days after Thanksgiving. Her protégé had taken cold a few weeks previous, it had not easily yielded to remedies, and that day he had a severe and sudden hemorrhage, so severe that Mrs. DeLaunay felt certain Amedée's life was ended.

"And we had thought it good for a few years," she said.

"Fortunately he has had some happiness, and the consolation of dying with his friends is a blessing. His wife understands the business thoroughly, and is

secure of a competence. She is a very clever woman."

Regina and her father heard of these people with a vast indifference, and made no comment usually; but the fact of Amedée's speedy departure from this world, to the mistress' evident regret, loosed their tongues, and their hearts together.

"May I call on him, mamma?" and "Fine boy was Amedée twenty years ago before he took to drink," both said together.

"The whole town will be there in the next few days," said mamma, "so that a visit now would be useless. Amedée, you know, was immensely popular. When people learned to know him, and convinced themselves he had not embezzled your funds, Howard, they took time to get acquainted with him. His superior character charmed them. What a loss he will be."

"It is a terrible time to die," said Regina, "in this weather. Snow may come any moment. He must feel discouraged."

Snow came the next day, but Amedée was not in the least dashed by the approach of death or the inclement weather. He had known long ago that death would come to him early, and he had looked for it under more distressing circumstances; but to die in his own home, in his native town, to die respected by his own, rich in the love of wife and mother, restored in reputation, to rest in the old churchyard where he had played a boy, where his brethren rested, all this was pure delight to the exile and robbed death of victory. He had thought once to die unconfessed and unanointed in a Texan barn, shot down in his drunkenness perhaps, and to be thrown without rite or pre-

paration into the nearest ditch that would hide him. So, while mother and wife and physician and friend ran to his service in sadness and trembling, he was calm and indifferent almost, made no complaint and smiled tranquilly upon them. The doctor made the end clear to them at once. Amedée was on his death-bed. He would have one or two more hemorrhages, perhaps, and die like a weakened child. In the meantime he might recover sufficiently to move about the house for a few weeks or months, but he would never go abroad more. It was a shock even to those who knew death had been near him ever since his return. It had really seemed to Madame, just after her son's happy marriage, that he would live long enough to close her eyes, ten years at least; he had appeared so strong and full of life. But what can one do with lungs that bleed! She had no complaint to make more than he. All her prayers had been answered, and a thousand blessings had flowed in upon her to which she had no right, except that they came straight from the heart of the good God. She had but to think of what she had received, and what might have been her son's fate, to smile with a resignation that was more akin to joy than sorrow.

These three months that he had been with her were a foretaste of heaven. Every day had been filled with gladness. He could not do too much for her, nor she enough for him. His photograph, a picture of his store, a photograph of his wife, *chère* Elizabeth, his Texan souvenirs hung in her kitchen just over the dolphin lamp which for so many years shone in the window for him. He was to live until her last prayer was answered. Her boy would die with the sacra

men s, and lie in consecrated ground. She had prayed for that, and most grateful was she to have her prayer answered. As Mrs DeLaunay said the whole town went in to visit him, and assure him of their best wishes. Monsieur Narcisse McCarthy wept briefly, and then secretly inquired of his daughter if she had the will and if she were positive everything was all right. He had to be assured, too, before he would weep again, and his tears were large enough to irritate old LaRoche, who knew of the will and could not feel the justice of leaving a McCarthy all his son's property. But these things were not to be spoken about! Mrs. Sullivan put on her black velvet and feathers to do honor to the sick man when she visited him, and could scarcely say a word in her effort to maintain the utmost propriety of speech and manner. Mrs. De Launay was often at his bedside those times when visitors were not allowed to see him. She spoke French well, and Madame had long talks with her on Amedée, in which the dear old Canadian mother gave her the entire history of his birth, babyhood, growth and manhood as only a mother can ; with particular attention to the sicknesses through which she nursed him, and the amount of catechism she had taught him. It was a spectacle of wonder to Mrs. DeLaunay to see the perfect love and confidence between them, and to hear the tenderness with which he called "Ma Mere."

"He is like a little child again," said Madame half smiling through her tears.

The young men helped to nurse him in the peculiar kindly fashion of Saranac, and the two friends Hugh and Winthrop were readiest with their services as watchers. The season of navigation had closed, and

the Captain was at home for the winter Amedée liked none other as these two; for the Captain had saved him from despair, and the lawyer had conceived a deep regard for him from the time of the wedding. They not only assisted at his bedside, but also gave Elizabeth their aid in the store, where Messieurs McCarthy and LaRoche eyed each other every day with considerable suspicion and distrust. Such clerks as the Captain and the lawyer made it pleasant for the younger customers, and perhaps increased the trade among that class while they served. Amedée as usual revived quickly and was moving around his room before Christmas. It was then Regina came, gracious and beautiful, to tell him how sorry she was for his sickness and how earnestly she hoped he would be out and able to attend to his business very soon. He smiled politely but seriously. He might have hoped that time would restore him to his old condition, but the priest had only that morning removed his hope from him.

"There are weeks of life for you," he had said gently, "but nothing more, Amedée."

"Then I must make one more good general confession before I go," said the cheerful fellow. "I'll get ready this afternoon, and do you please come in the morning, my father, while I am strong. Tell me, does Elizabeth, or any of them know this?"

"The doctor told them the very day you were taken down."

"Then I am spared their sorrow," he said.

Regina came in with his wife afterwards, and made her pretty speech of regret and sympathy

"I am glad you came to-day," he said, "for I had

just thought of a little incident that happened in the summer, and wished to have it off my mind. I owe you a little reparation for having once helped to deceive you perhaps."

She smiled indulgently, and his wife said, smiling, "He must soon make his confession, and so he is getting very particular about remembering everything."

"This is a trifle," he said, laughing at some memory, "but the circumstances were very curious. Until you saw me at the Point, Miss DeLaunay, had you ever seen me before?"

"Not to remember you" she said.

"I do not speak of years ago," he continued, "for you were then very young; but this summer I mean, before you called on me in Sol Tuttle's."

He was smiling at the remembrance of such a meeting.

"I cannot recall having met you," she said.

"Do you remember the tramp who bowed to you on the dock at Whitehall? Do you remember the wrecking of Captain Sullivan's boat? Do you recall the cabin in the woods where the ladies slept, and how you sat on the old porch talking?"

"Is it possible?" she cried.

"I was the tramp," he went on. "Since that night I did not once think of it, but this morning I remembered the letters I handed to you to read. I told you I found them, and asked if you could make out their owner's name. That was a trick, Miss DeLaunay, which meant no harm I hope. Mr. Winthrop handed me the letters, and bade me give them to you. He laughed as he did so; and you did not seem to mind

them, but told me to give them back to him. Afterwards I was afraid I might have done harm. I took money for it, and if there was injustice done I must restore the money. I would not keep it."

"Mr. Winthrop had an object in acting so I presume," she answered carelessly, "but it was entirely harmless as far as I was concerned. You can quiet your conscience about it. And I am inclined to be grateful both for handing me the letters, and for telling me of the little deception. Mr. Winthrop will be mortified to hear that I caught him so easily. Be kind enough to tell him."

Then she talked about the weather.

CHAPTER XXIII.

AT REST.

Madame LaRoche was indignant with herself for her bitter pain at the sight of Amedée dying. It was like a reflection on the kindness of the good God, who had saved her son from a miserable death in Texas, and given her the blessed privilege of receiving his last sigh. But the agony continued in spite of her indignation, and the thought of parting caused her exquisite pain. She could not help thinking of the years they might have spent together had he not taken that unfortunate cold. She blamed herself for a lack of watchful care over him, and she ventured, though with shame for her greediness, to ask the good God for a stay of death. She knew it was quite useless. Her boy was dying. Only a miracle could save him, and there had been miracles enough in his life. It

was sorrowful work to sit with him and Elizabeth, all three knowing the end was near, to embrace him each night and morning with the thought of the last embrace rankling in the heart. He made it more painful by his gentleness. The world had all at once faded from him, most guiltless of all sinners. All good fortune had come back to him in one ship, and the pain of dying seemed nothing in the light of his restoration.

Saranac was in tears for him, which was not wonderful in a town whose entire population shed weekly tears over the heroines of the story papers. The story of his life in Texas had been finally absorbed by the Saranac mind; the injustice done him by De Launay was felt, but not clearly known; the thrilling events of his return had touched every heart; it was precise'y like a story in the *Ledger*, but alas! the hero was dying at the moment his prosperity was greatest. So the Saranac people wept, and called to see their hero in numbers. Mrs. DeLaunay brought flowers, and smoothed his pillow; Regina and her father agreed with her that it was not the place for them.

"It would certainly trouble his dreams to see either of you," said Mrs. DeLaunay. This was true, for the only shadow on his dying hours, very light it was, sprang from the thoughts of what might have been. It was too far off to cause any resentment. Mrs. DeLaunay had the pleasure of seeing Tim Grady a penitent at Amedée's bedside. Humiliation had not conquered the old man's conceit, but the failure of his most precise prophecies had softened his heart. The whole town was weeping over his

godson, how could he, who had the right and duty to weep, stand apart with dry eyes! And the boy had done well, and was going down to the grave like a Christian. He came in to see him, therefore, bringing a crucifix indulged for the dying, whose like was not in the county outside of the priest's house. This was his excuse; and then after much hemming he made his appeal just as Mrs. DeLaunay entered in her quietest way and sat down near the door unnoticed.

"I'm goin' to ask yer pardon, Amedée," said Mr. Grady with the air of one who was astonishing the town, and Amedée made a gesture of dissent, but the old man continued, "for makin' things harder for ye at the start than they ought to've been; but I was mighty uncertain about yez, an' I was afraid ye'd break yer mother's heart, an' ruin yer father, for I did *not* belave ye had such will an' grace in ye, as ye've shown. An' if people hadn't interfered I'd have come long ago to tell ye this, an' let ye know I stud up for ye agin DeLaunay whin yer own flesh an' blood gev ye up. But people *will* interfere. An' I don't forget ye're me godson, an' I was as proud of ye for twenty years as if ye were me own; ye know that; an' I'm proud of ye now, prouder than ever; an' I hope ye won't go without forgivin' me, an' on me knees," he went down at the word, "I ask yer pardon for the mane things I did, an' the mane words I said agin ye, which was agin me bounden duty, sence a god-father should stick to his godson through sin and shame, in all weathers, till the last breath. Do you forgive me, Amedée?"

"Oh, Tim," said Amedée, "I forgive if there's any-

thing to forgive. You always did what you thought right. Now whisper." Tim rose, and bent over him. "I don't wish the others to hear. When I am dead, do you prepare me for the coffin. Remember, I want no one but you, godfather, and anyone you choose to help you, to prepare my body."

The unbidden tears burst suddenly from Tim's eyes, and for a moment he could not speak.

"I'll see to it," he said at last, and turned to the door. Mrs. DeLaunay saluted him gravely, and whispered:

"You were slow in coming to it, Mr. Grady, but I was delighted to hear your apologies to that poor boy, and see you on your knees to him at last."

His glance ought to have slain her. He went down to the store where Captain LaRoche and Monsieur Narcisse McCarthy kept watch on each other, and from that moment began to order them about like cash boys. As they were all old friends they quarrelled amicably. No one was kinder to Amedee in his sickness than John Winthrop, who felt a meek remorse for his share in the first misfortunes of the man. As a lawyer he could not avoid being harsh at that time, but his harshness had been unnecessary. He made up for it now by sharing the watch in the sick-room with Hugh, and by a hundred little kindnesses. It occurred to Amedee one day that Winthrop might like to know what he had said to Regina concerning those letters; he could not help thinking there was something more serious in that bit of deception than he could make out; and John's kindness deserved that he should be enlightened. He forgot the matter directly until one morning the young men were leav-

ing him after the night watch. Then he called Winthrop to the bedside.

"I should have told you before," he said, "that you and I were not altogether strangers when we met here first. Do you remember the tramp whom you paid to hand certain letters to Miss DeLaunay, that night the *Adirondack* went ashore above Westport. I am that tramp "

"You surprise me," said Winthrop, and he might have added, you alarm me, so great and sudden a fear took hold of him, turning his face slowly to a blue pallor.

"I was doubtful of that affair," continued Amedée, "and I told Miss DeLaunay the whole story. She didn't seem to mind it. I hope there was no harm in it. But I just thought you ought to know."

"Thank you," said Winthrop calmly. "It is of no account. No harm was done, and it need not trouble your conscience "

But he cursed that conscience under his breath with a blasphemy that could not be put on paper.

"I am so glad," said Amedée. "Good morning."

It was the last morning Amedée saw with mortal eyes. When the priest made his usual visit shortly after the breakfast hour he saw for the first time the death-look in the patient face. For that matter he might have seen it in the faces of wife and mother, who had both recognized the fatal sign when the morning light first betrayed it. Their mute glances towards the priest while they waited for his decision were half hopeful, half-despairing. He gave them a look of intelligence, and with a gesture ordered the usual preparations.

"I am going to anoint you, Amedée," was all he said.

"Did ever a man need it more," said Amedée sighing.

He had read the ritual of Extreme Unction over and over until the significance and full intent of the sacrament had lighted his intelligence and warmed his heart. At his own wish it had been deferred until the last moment, that he might feel all the more strengthened and comforted by its reception; it was a delicate way of telling him how near the end was, and he understood. His mother and wife calmly, but with beating, anguished hearts, lighted the candles and knelt in silent prayer. The sacred oil was applied to Amedée's closed eyes: May the Lord, through this holy oiling and His most loving mercy, forgive you for the sins of sight, said the priest! Then to his ears, the oil was applied, and the priest said, may the Lord, through this holy oiling and His most loving mercy, forgive you for the sins of hearing! Such things as I have heard and seen, the sick man sighed! When the oil touched the nostrils, the priest said, may the Lord, through this holy oiling and His most loving mercy, forgive you the sins of smell! Over the thin, compressed lips the priest drew his thumb in the form of a cross, and said while Amedée watched him dreamily: May the Lord, through this holy oiling and His most loving mercy, forgive you for sins of taste and speech! Then Amedée spread his wasted hands on the counterpane, and in the palm of each the priest made the sign of the cross with the oil saying: May the Lord, through this holy oiling and His most loving

mercy, forgive you for the sins of touch! If I were a priest, thought Amedée, he would rub the holy oil on the back of my hands; poor hands, no man's money and no man's blood ever stained you, but you suffered just the same. Madame rose at this point and uncovered her son's feet, the priest touched the soles with the oil and said for the last time: May the Lord, through this holy oiling and His most loving mercy, forgive you for the sins of walking! I shall never walk again, thought Amedée, until the resurrection.

The last prayers were said, the candles extinguished, and the priest sat down beside the bed to speak a few last words of consolation, but Amedée did not need them. His face was glowing with happiness and his thoughts were crowding upon him like a mob, not in disorder but too rapidly for expression. It was like delirium, and unlike for he did not lose his mental balance. The sight of the priest seemed to bring before his bed in solemn procession all the priests that had ever been and would be; the thought of his mother and his wife brought to his vision innumerable mourners, weeping for their dead. He was not sad, nor indifferent. His tears fell; he saw their tears and their faces; at one moment those in the room kissed him and knelt about him praying with lighted candles; he consoled and encouraged them in his broken sentences, and said again and again, I am so happy; and his face showed his happiness. Some one said at midnight, it is twelve o'clock, and a long time after, when troops of splendidly colored visions had flashed before his mind, he heard the clock strike one. Mother, he said suddenly, at what hour was I

born. Just at this hour, she answered trembling. He smiled and died! Madame and Elizabeth gave loud cries of anguish, and the men bowed their heads. For a little while there was that silence which is found nowhere but at the death-bed when the agony is ended. Then there was a stir among the men, and Mr. Grady began to say the beads in aid of the poor soul at the judgment seat. Monsieur Narcisse McCarthy had been making ready to perform that function, but he was too slow and too polite for a man who never missed an opportunity. He answered Mr. Grady's invocations with less fervor than was usual with him.

When the prayers were over the mourning women were led away to another room, and the dead was left in Mr. Grady's charge.

"The last words Amedée said to me," Tim announced to those present, "was that I should take charge o' the layin' out; an' he forbid that any wan besides me should lay a hand on him."

Every one submitted to this declaration.

"But he left it to me to choose a helper," continued Mr. Grady loftily, "an' if Misther McCarthey 'd be kind enough to lend a hand——"

Monsieur Narcisse accepted with dignity and reserve, as if he doubted the wisdom of poor Amedee's choice. He admitted later that Tim had been the boy's godfather much longer than he himself had been his father-in-law, but maintained that the widow's father should hold a position of confidence next to the parents of Amedee. Mr. Grady discoursed tearfully while they made the preparations for burial, and it was to Monsieur McCarthy's disadvantage that he could not feel similar grief.

"You wor at his christenin', McCarthy," said Tim. "An' ye mind how he kicked an' yelled an' screamed. Poor Amedee! quiet enough are ye at this moment! And he weighed fourteen pound if he weighed an ounce. Not much more than that now ye'd think to luk at him. I carried him on me showlder manny a time when he weighed more. 'Twas I that tot him to shwim, an' a purtier shwimmer than he was at fifteen ye wouldn't find on all Champlain. D'ye mind how he jumped into the lake the night we thried to lasso him, an' shwam to his own mother's door. 'Twas a blessin' he didn't dhrown then in his sins. I never thought he'd live to get the sacraments, an' here he is afore me wid the blessed oils hardly dhry on him, an' all his throubles over, an' a splendid funeral waitin' for him, an' a whole town cryin' for him, an' a wife an' childhren to folly him."

"Children," said Monsieur Narcisse.

"Well, there may be yet," said Tim maliciously, "an' then wills or no wills the store goes to thim."

Mrs. Sullivan appeared in the room just as they were finishing the work of preparation, an uttered an exclamation at the sight of Tim Grady.

"Musha, thin," she said in a low tone, "but it takes yerself, Tim, to show the brazen face when it's needed. An' I wondher the boy doesn't turn on the bed at the touch o' yer hand after all the heart-scaldin' ye gev him. An' if he wor anny relation o' mine, it's on the outside o' the door ye'd be this minit washing the mud off the steps, which is too good for the likes o' ye."

"Did ye come here to raise a storm in the presence o' the dead?" asked Mr. Grady sternly.

"Since he's quiet," said she, looking at the boy, "I may well be."

"Did ye know," said Mr. Grady, "that on me two knees I begged his pardon yistherday, an' that he asked me himself to lay him out, an' forbid anny other livin' sowl to come next or nigh him while I was preparin' him for his rest. Wasn't it I that stud up for him whin you an' the likes iv ye scarcely remembered his name? Didn't I tackle DeLaunay for him whin yer own son was helpin' to chate him out iv his rights? Didn't I go to Texas afther him—"

"Ye did, 'Tim," interrupted Mrs. Sullivan tenderly, "an ye spoiled it all be yer behavior whin ye kem home. But if he's pardoned ye what right have we to say a word."

This excited conversation was carried on almost in whispers and gave Monsieur McCarthy much pleasure. He foresaw his own insignificance at Amedée's funeral; Tim would receive the appointment of director from Captain LaRoche, and the widow would not object; therefore it pleased him that Mr. Grady should receive an occasional rasping from his friends. He could afford to be insignificant. The will was in favor of the widow, who was now sole proprietor of the finest store in Saranac; and Captain LaRoche, although avoiding speech, was wrathful that his son had left him no share in it. Madame would not hear of such a thing. The two fathers had shared, while Amedée was dying, in the management of the store; now Monsieur Narcisse McCarthy alone had a right to ask for the key, to enter, to handle the goods, and to look at the books. It was humiliating, and if the captain said nothing his numerous sons

and daughters and their sons and daughters said more than enough for him, out of Madame's hearing.

The waking of Amedée was a notable event in the history of Saranac. The hero of a real romance was dead, and the whole town, including the prosperous villain who had helped to kill him, went to look at the wasted face, to shed tears of sympathy, and tears of onions where sympathy was weak, to gossip in the parlor, to sip wine, and to congratulate the widow on her will, whose meanest word was now town talk.

It was a hitch in the romance that the villain should be on earth and the hero in heaven, but this was borne with since the hero had left so popular a will. Everyone spoke with LaRoche about it, and admired his generosity in permitting such a will to be made; and as this praise was all he could get out of the estate he made shift to be content with it, but he ground his teeth when he looked at Monsieur Narcisse. The strangers who came to look at Amedée or to pray beside him found it an ordeal to pass through the crowd in the parlor, and to retire again. It was a decorous crowd by day, and a chatty crowd at night. The women gossiped in the parlor, and the men told solemn tales in the kitchen, for it is notable that men take these occasions with greater seriousness than women, though with fewer tears. Being in good part boatmen they felt glad that Amedée had found a decent harbor at last, and died with a good name. Captain Sullivan was the most respected man among them for the help he had given the poor lad against the powers of the town. Thus they talked for the two days and nights that Amedée's body lay in state in his own parlor, until the morning of the funeral came.

CHAPTER XXIV.

REJECTED!

John Winthrop was a pall-bearer at the funeral, and it can be imagined how the burying of Amedée interested him. Had he his way the body would have been pitched into the lake with a weight to the heels. He was half disgusted with himself for the insatiable hatred for Amedée which took possession of him. He was certain it was insanity, for his good sense told him that the honesty of the Texan was to be commended, but told him in vain. He could not shake off his passion, could not look at the dead body as a dead force powerless forevermore, could not take a business view of the matter at all. He was ruined hopelessly by the act of this dead tramp. Regina had endured the disgrace of a dishonest father partly because there was no escape from it, but a dishonored husband it was in her power to avoid. And in her esteem he knew himself forever dishonored. He had done a detestable thing, betrayed his friend, fixed upon him a false charge. For nothing! To no purpose because this worthless dead thief had a scruple of conscience. He looked at him in his coffin and scowled that he had no power to torture him. He rejoiced in the tears, the groans, the passionate farewells of mother and wife hanging over the wasted body. It soothed him for a moment, that bitter anguish. It did him good to see the coffin lid screwed down finally.

No one but Regina understood the strange expression on his face, and *she* paid little heed. The snow was deep, and the hole into which they lowered the coffin looked ghastly. It was not deep or hideous enough for Winthrop, who shovelled his share of earth on the coffin with glee. It was childish, unmanly, ungenerous as he knew, but his pain and despair had to vent themselves on something; and what did a lost wretch like him care for generosity or manliness. His day was done. The living might be generous, the dead were dead. Poor Winthrop had lost his balance. It was well that he spoke not to discover the loss to others. His face was pale and severe, and in returning Hugh called his attention to it.

Winthrop endured Sullivan's chatter in silence. It was painful to argue with him, who owned the unanswerable argument of success. He alone now had a flawless title to Regina's esteem. Of the three men this young woman had been led to respect at various times but one had been able to maintain his reputation. The other two were alike in guiltiness, but the younger was the greater sinner; for DeLaunay had betrayed his innocent clerk whereas he, John Winthrop, had betrayed his innocent friend. It was here that the lawyer lost his head. Had he won Regina his treason would have annoyed but not sickened him; and in time he would have escaped even annoyance. Loss of her meant for him the end of all things. He could no longer look at the situation as one disinterested and hopeful, and study the chances of success. Like a brave man cornered he was bent on resisting to the utmost his fate, and could hope that his might be the one chance in a thousand.

He was capable of nothing more. He could not see ground for accomplishing more. Had he kept his wits about him he would not have blundered.

Regina had taken the affair very sensibly, and if let alone might in the end have felt flattered. All this villany was done for her sake. She began to see a pleasant logic in it. Captain Sullivan, if he ever desired to marry her, probably informed Winthrop of her father's sin in order to drive the lawyer from the field; and John had his revenge by contriving that she should read the guilty letter.

Men were evidently much alike. When clever, handsome, magnetic, like Amedée, John, Hugh, and her father they were great rogues, powerful sinners; when virtuous or spotless they were priests or cranks, too stupid or too indifferent to practice necessary villainy. She wondered though if such a thing as unimpeachable honesty existed anywhere. She had once thought herself and all her intimates honest. Her mother had slipped once, and her father many times; she herself had been wilfully unjust to Amedée, whose father had sold his son's right to justice against De-Launay for money.

They were all honest until it came to a pinch; then the father sold his son, and the friend betrayed the friend. Of course these were not serious matters in which honesty had failed them. If called on to be martyrs these people would probably go to the scaffold cheerfully. In minor points there was evidently no standard but comfort or convenience. While she would like to have known of men and women who lived faithful and spotless in all things big and little, she was determined not to be cast down by discovering

the sins of her friends. All men were sinners. For poor Winthrop there was the heavy excuse that he had sinned against the lesser love for sake of the greater. She was willing to pardon him the moment he confessed.

Had he known of her humor—and keeping his wits about him he would have discovered it—the end of the chapter would have been far different. But his wits were clean gone. This spotless creature whom he adored was lost to him forever; for the reasons, as he believed, that her standards were angelic and that she had not an ounce of practical sense in her system. She could not allow for human weakness. She was disgusted with her father, now much more with him whom she had praised for his fidelity to his friend! As happiness and life were surely ended for him, he proceeded to act like a man on his death-bed. He must make atonement, bid farewell, and dispose of his property. He first made confession to Regina, and was not surprised that she received his frigid statement without the least display of feeling.

“I owe you an apology,” he said, “for those letters which were given to you by LaRoche that night the steamer went ashore. Amedée told me he had explained the deception practised on you. You can guess what prompted me to the deception. I was deep’y in love with you, and desperate because there seemed no hope for me. You were dreaming of Captain Sullivan. That morning when you fell asleep on the cabin porch I stood watching your face. You murmured his name with such an expression that it drove me mad. I could not resist the temptation to destroy your esteem for him. I sent you the letter which did that.”

"Very effectually," she said politely, not a trace of anger or other feeling in tone or manner.

"I have no way of making reparation," he continued, "but except to myself I trust there has been no harm done. I wish sincerely to get forgiveness from you."

"You have it," she answered cordially, and almost added, "Please don't feel so badly," but saved herself in time.

"I owe it to the Captain to put him right in your estimation. Although he actually wrote that letter, he was utterly unconscious of having revealed a secret. I will explain it to you if you like. Indeed I must explain it to you. First let me read the letter."

She would have objected, but he did not give her time.

"You see how it reads. As if I were already acquainted with the facts in your father's case. He is not telling me something new, but commenting on something which both of us are supposed to know."

When she looked mystified he handed her the fatal letter of whose existence Hugh was unconscious, and pointed out its peculiarity

"Naturally you read it hastily when Amedée handed it to you," he continued sadly. "I was puzzled over its meaning when I first received it. I knew nothing of the LaRoche trouble, was out of town when it began and ended, and could only surmise that Hugh was referring to something which was town-talk at home, and which he supposed I had heard. On returning I made a few inquiries, and could learn nothing. Then I spoke to Hugh cautiously. I asked him if it were he who told me of

something in connection with the DeLaunays, which might have landed one of them in prison. He denied everything promptly. I studied the letter again, and hit upon a solution of the mystery. Observe that it consists of three paragraphs. The middle one might be left out, and the letter is complete. As it stands it is puzzling for it supposes me to have a knowledge which I had not. The explanation seems to be this: Hugh had been at Dennamora prison that week hunting up a position for a friend. The mention of the word prison in the first paragraph suggested to him the recent LaRoche trouble, and he wrote unconsciously his thoughts about it in the second paragraph; in the third he returns to the proper subject of the letter. He has never once dreamed of his innocent betrayal of a family secret. Fidelity is his great virtue. Even if he never gave you his word to keep the secret, his lips would have been the last to mention it. You must do him the justice to hold him innocent of this wrong."

"I do," she answered somewhat agitated. "Your explanation clears away other misunderstandings which had annoyed me. He is your debtor in that."

"And then he too loves you," said John mournfully, "but he has always thought himself unworthy of you, and has not so much as dreamed of pressing a suit. Hugh is naturally noble even if his training leads him to say and do awkward things. I suppose his religion has something to do with it. I hope you feel that I have done my utmost to restore him to your good opinion."

"You have done your utmost," she replied quite calmly, but she was hot and cold by turns, and could

hardly speak. A dying man could not have exposed his ill doing better or have repaired injuries more thoroughly than poor Winthrop. There was nothing now for him to do, as far as Regina was concerned, but to die. He could not make up his mind to do that right away. Of his wits there remained to him only that fraction which bade him fight for his hope to the last. He did not see that with his own hand he had destroyed it when he had put up on its pedestal once more her shattered ideal of Hugh, and published the Captain's love for her. It was joy that agitated her, and she hardly heard him beginning to plead his own cause. A look and a single word silenced him. She never knew that the word sentenced him to death. Almost directly, hope and suspense being over, he became cordial and commonplace, and could talk cheerfully with Mrs. DeLaunay when that clever lady entered. Her appearance gave Regina a chance to escape politely. The eyes he sent after her explained to Mrs. DeLaunay that an interesting and sorrowful event had occurred.

"So Regina means to marry the Captain," was her secret comment as she proceeded to interest the lawyer in her newest scheme for the benefit of Saranac. To Winthrop, although he listened and criticized suavely, her talk was the merest chatter.

"Every year the priest has a fair," she said, "and this year I am going to help him make it the grandest of successes."

"I thought you had done with the humbug of creeds."

"I am just beginning to pay attention to them," she answered, "and besides what has a fair to do with

creeds. One month it's the priest, and the next the Odd Fellow. We help both to make money."

"Money can always be found around a creed."

"But not in it always. You know Father McManus as well as I do. Pray don't be bitter when the helping of a man like that is concerned."

"O, if it's the man—"

"Who else? Suppose a gruff, callous farmer held his place; would I lift a finger to help him? Then tell me some nice things to do to help this pleasant and hard-worked priest. I have been made a sort of superintendent. I must have some curiosities to make up for lack of variety and costliness."

"Exhibit me"

"And Captain Sullivan," she added slyly.

"No, he's ordinary. He's a success. I am a failure."

"You have escaped then against your will?"

"Oh, very much against it."

"What a consolation to know that in breaking your own heart you have spared the heart of your friend."

"If success meant the smashing of his heart to bits," he said savagely, "I would not regret it. And he has the same temper in this matter."

"I see you will be of no use in the fair."

"No, I will all my usefulness to the Captain. By that time he will have heart enough to do the work of two."

"This girl was born to make trouble," Mrs. De-Launay said to herself as Winthrop went off growling. "The sooner she marries some one the better. If this love business remains in suspense long I shall get no help out of these people for my table. The Captain ought to propose to morrow."

She told Captain Sullivan of Winthrop's failure supposing it had for him real significance. His face clouded.

"I had supposed," he said, "that sooner or later their marriage would be a sure thing "

Mrs. DeLaunay was mystified at his words and expression. Had not Winthrop told her that the Captain was a success where he had been a failure?

"What are you frowning about?" she said. "Is the news so unexpected and startling?"

"I am afraid for John," he replied. "He is queer in some points, and this is one of them. You don't know what a tremendous sorrow this will be to him. He never was hopeful, but still he had hope."

She found herself affected by his unaccountable manner. Successful lovers do not frown on hearing of a rival's defeat, become anxious over the ill effects of a rejection, and openly declare their disappointment at their own success. Someone was making a mistake, and she hoped it was not Regina. To make sure she besieged Winthrop in his office next day on behalf of the fair, and when he was thoroughly annoyed by her persistency she told him what the Captain had said, and explained the cause of her mystification.

"He is honest and cunning both," said Winthrop. "It is true that he expected my success and had no hopes for himself, not thinking that she ever would care enough for him to marry him. And he had wit enough to conceal from you what he has concealed from all but her since he was conscious of it. He has reason to fear for me, because I have said things to him at times which he cannot understand. It is

only I that have made the mistake. It can never be remedied."

The explanation was rational, but she thought if Winthrop could have seen the captain's face when he spoke to her, he would be now tempted to believe that the mistake had been made in another direction. She did not say outright that her thought was in favor of the captain's heart-freedom. It would not do to complicate the situation; but she really suspected that Captain Sullivan had never once thought of love or marriage in Regina's connection. If true it would be mortifying to all concerned.

CHAPTER XXV.

OPEN CONFESSION.

Winthrop was incurably selfish. His fine sense of honor was no hindrance to the rugged growth of his selfishness which had its proper influence on his moral character; we look for consideration in people of refined tastes; the enthusiast in art, whose tears fall at the grace of a statue and the delicate coloring of a picture, should not be capable of wounding his fellows; and the man, whose sense of honor would send him to death smiling, should have the sweet and unselfish temper of a saint. But a violet can bloom in the shadow of a muck heap, and a fine sense of honor exist in the midst of vices. Winthrop was honorable as far as he thought honor should go, and as selfish as an intelligent, warm-hearted man could be. He felt some remorse for his treason to Hugh, it offended that honor which he had guarded for years with pride. But in his plans of suicide he had pity for none but himself. He never once considered his

trembling and anxious father, the grief which would surely befall him at the fate of his only child; nor the reflection that would be cast on Regina, whose rejection of his suit had led him to death! He thought of nothing but ridding himself of his intolerable pain, of the life which had become a horror to him. He delayed the crime for one reason chiefly: it would not do to create a scene, a sensation, a scandal. He detested scenes. He studied therefore to have his death happen in an apparently natural manner.

He was forced to hide his grief, and mask his intentions. The fact that he would soon be dead enabled him to assume a false cheerfulness which imposed on all but Hugh Sullivan. The temptation to mope, or to surrender himself to frenzy was checked, if not removed, by the mental sight of that dead body whose heartache was forever ended. Why grieve now over that which in a few weeks would be nothing. He was well satisfied with his comfortable materialism. He wound up his business without hurry, and talked of a trip to California in the interest of a few New York mine-owners. His father was entirely deceived, closely as he watched him. John even had the hardihood to jest before him on his chances of winning Regina's hand; he would grow moody and hopeful by turns; and accepted his father's sympathy precisely as in the good time when there had been hope. Nevertheless, there were days when his grief burst the unnatural bonds, and drove him to madness almost. He fled then to distant towns and returned only when the frenzy and its traces were gone. In his sleep which was sound but not dreamless he went over the trouble which

had come to him and enacted the scenes of hope and expected happiness through which he had passed. So little did his approaching death affect him that in these moments the thought of it occurred only to soothe his anguish. It was in this way his father learned the misfortune that threatened them. He met him wandering in the upper hall one midnight, and moaning gently. A glance told the father that his son was in a state of somnambulism. When he returned to his room old David followed as far as the door. John had begun to talk.

"If that letter had never been written," he said quite clearly, and repeated the sentence many times with heavy sighs. "How could she refuse me, when I loved her as he never can. She—the only woman in the world for me! What pain!" At this he groaned so deeply that the old man gave a low cry. "But death will end it," went on the sleeper, "what a relief is death," and as if the thought soothed him he slipped into bed with a prolonged sigh. His father sat beside him quietly and studied his face in despair. The few sentences he had heard might mean that his boy had been rejected and was going over in his sleep the drama of his disappointment; or they might simply be the result of John's anxiety over the result of his suit. Sitting there thinking of possibilities the old father felt the hand of God heavy upon him. How much was he to blame for the condition in which this boy found himself before the third decade of his life had well ended. He remembered how often he had sat thus at his bedside in all the years since his babyhood. The moulding of the young life had been for twenty years entirely in his own hands. But he

had known little of the moulding process, supposing that his son would grow up as he had grown or better, y s, much better. So far he had been a joy and an honor to him. The thought that from this moment he might look to see him brought home dead, disfigured by knife or bullet or long days in the water, was terrible. In what point had he failed, to bring upon his son such a destiny? John began to talk again, but this time indistinctly. The old man recalling a certain trick of his own boyhood, took the sleeper's hand and began to smooth it gently, fixing his eyes on the composed face.

"What are you thinking of?" he said.

"Of death," said John distinctly. "I wish I could die now, but of course no one must know. I must wait."

"How about your father? It will kill him to lose you."

"Death is better for us all," said the sleeper with a slight frown.

"But your father wants life and you," urged the old man. "How could you break his heart?"

"As she broke mine. My heart is broken," and his hand went to his side in pain, the sleeper groaning.

"Then you are bound to kill yourself, no matter who dies on your coffin?"

"Let every man look to himself," answered John.

"You have a hard heart," said the father. "You would not be a good lover, being so poor a son, and you deserved to lose that girl. She stood by her father always."

"So she did," the sleeper assented, and for the

first time his calm, melancholy face grew troubled. He began to mutter indistinct nothings again. Once more the father urged him to give up the idea of death.

"Never," said John, "though hell opened."

Here he began to show signs of awakening, and the old man tottered away weeping, afraid to have him know that his secret crept through his dreams and revealed itself. He talked the matter over the next day with Hugh and learned from the unwilling lips of the Captain the story of John's disappointment.

"Oh, well, that settles it," said the old man. "He may kill himself at any time. You know his mind on that point as well as I do, Hugh Sullivan. I wonder he has not done it before this. What is delaying him?"

"I don't really think," said Hugh dubiously, "he has made up his mind to suicide. He talks of a trip to California, and he is getting his business ready to be able to get away."

"I didn't know that. He won't hang himself in Saranac then, but he must be watched. We must make ourselves his guards, I for the house, and you for outdoors. Of course we can't prevent him in the long run, but we might delay it until his senses come back, and then he might find it worth while living."

Old David spoke in a hard, business-like manner, for now that the danger was made certain he could face it with desperate courage, and scheme to avoid it.

"We must be careful how we act," said Hugh; "he's one that doesn't care for scenes, and, if he suspected, it might anger him."

"I don't know," was the answer. "I think I've been too careful of his feelings, and didn't talk out as I should have at the right time. Hereafter I don't give two cents for his feelings if by hurting them I can do him any good. He's going to do this thing on the sly, quiet and natural, as if he had no hand in it. Now, when I get a chance I'm going to tell him fair and square that if he's found dead anywhere I'm going to hang myself. He wouldn't like to be made ridiculous in that way."

The idea was acceptable to Hugh, as his good sense was too strong to let him accept suicide for a finish of a love affair. The mysteries of soul growth had never made even their existence known to him, and he was unable to see that there is a training and even a philosophy which properly leads to suicide. Henceforward John Winthrop had a bodyguard, and so efficient that he gave it the slip the first moment a frenzy of rage and grief came upon him. His grief woke him up at midnight and sent him out stealthily to shout and rave his anguish to the air. He was gone an hour when old David discovered his flight. A quiet search through the house and gardens, and the absence of his outdoor clothing proved that he was abroad. There were no trains until five o'clock. He had therefore been compelled to travel afoot, and in a short time the father had Captain Sullivan out of bed started in pursuit.

"All he has to do to die on a night like this," said old Winthrop, "is to take a dose of morphine and lie down to freeze."

The Captain had little fear of this calamity if Winthrop were in his senses, but it was hard to say what

fancies ruled his brain. He advised old David to let the matter right itself, for search would annoy John, —advice quite thrown away upon him. To calm his excitement Hugh examined the shore for a mile or two, and went out on the ice returning to visit the fishing hut of Sol Tuttle. He saw the light from its single window a long way off. It was a primitive affair, nothing more than a box with a door, a single pane of glass for a window, and a stove-pipe sticking through the roof. The box had a hole cut in its floor, another hole was cut in the ice, and there in lazy contentment the fisherman sat and hooked or speared the fish that came within reach. Hugh took a peep through the window before going to the door, and saw John sitting within at his ease. Sol was droning some story in his ear, but the listener's mind was far away from it. He sat with a line in his hand watching a hole in the ice, as if the tragedy of the fish world interested him. Hugh's appearance gave him a slight shock, for he felt at once that his design upon his own life was discovered. They were watching and following him. Bitter indeed it was that the man he had betrayed should be standing guard over his broken life, preserving it, one would think, as did the ancients their captives to honor the triumph of the conqueror. Sullivan did not seek to hide on entering the hut, but before Sol he would say nothing,

"Looking for me," John said sourly.

"Not now, I've found you. The old men didn't know whether you had gone fishing or fighting, and to satisfy him I took a walk around. Much fish, Sol?"

"Toll'able," said the husband of Sairey lazily.

"I forgot one thing," observed the lawyer, "a little whiskey for a night like this. Go up to my house, and tell my father to send me down a bottle of the best "

So I obeyed mournfully.

"There wuz a time," he said, "w'en sich a errant would a set me jumpin'. But sence I tuck the pledge it's like attendin' one's own funeril, an' I hate to go like thunder. But that's my failure o' course, an' I go with pleasure for you young tellers, which sooner or later must dry up same as me if ye would save yesselves "

"Of course," said John, when they were alone, "my father rooted you out of bed, and sent you looking for a supposed corpse along the shore? Well, I have made a fool of myself, thinking to hide such a purpose from him. Why it must have been written all over me when an old, half blind man could guess it like this."

"You gave it away in your sleep," said Hugh." He heard you talking of it at midnight. You might as well give it up altogether now unless you want to kill him off with anxiety, and have the town talking and laughing at you. Besides it isn't fair to Miss DeLaunay to mark her life wth such a thing. She would always feel as if she had a hand in it."

It grated fiercely on Winthrop's pride to be talked to in this fashion, but nothing else could be expected from his friend. And it hurt him much to think that he had never once considered Regina and how his death would reflect on her any more than he had considered his father, and in a former instance his friend.

"Don't talk of it," he said impatiently; "the fit is

gone by, and I shall live until the earth is tired of me, and without duplicity, too. You never knew the trick I lay'd on you. I must settle this business once for all. Read that letter carefully."

Hugh read his own letter of the previous year, and read it easily, then cried out in surprise, and read it again. It was his without doubt.

"How could I have written that thing," he said. "Was it through this you got acquainted with the La Roche trouble? It beats me."

Winthrop explained how the telltale paragraph was written, and left Hugh in wonder.

"Of course, that makes it plain," said the Captain, "and then I was accustomed to tell you everything, and to have no secrets from you, and it slipped out natural."

Although this affectionate remark was made as a mere statement without a tone of sentimental feeling, it went straight to Winthrop's heart.

"But you ought to know how I used it," he said. "I was afraid Regina DeLaunay thought too much of you at one time, that she was making a sort of hero out of you, and I placed the letter in her way. She read it and was disgusted with you."

Hugh laughed heartily.

"You were served just right when you lost her after such a lawyer's trick as that," he said. "I know you had it in you to do it. Confess now, didn't you arrange to get Amedée drunk the first day he came to town, knowing how things would turn out."

"No. But I knew if he were allowed to enter the town free and happy, he would do as he did."

"Both tricks of the same color. And what good did you get out of 'em?"

"Only evil and sorrow. That cursed Amedée gave away the letter trick to Regina. I am glad he is dead. I ask your pardon for the way I treated you."

"Don't mention it," said the Captain.

"Great gods," said John Winthrop to himself as he looked at his chum's impassive face and indifferent air, "he takes this treason as a thing to smile at, and makes me ashamed for trembling at the confession of it."

"I don't think this letter business hurt you much with Miss DeLaunay," Hugh began in a kindly way.

"I know it didn't," Winthrop broke in. "Had I shot her father and burned the town it would have made no difference, since she was in love with you, with your acting in *Ingomar*, with your generous defence of her father, with your uniform, with your big boat, with your coolness and courage the night the steamer went ashore at Westport. She admitted as much to me the other day. It maddened me that night to hear her in her sleep call you by name as if she were already your wife. Of course the letter cooled her affection for a time, but now it is stronger than ever as you know."

Had Winthrop's attention been elsewhere than with the fishes he would have seen that Hugh did not know. That hardy young man, who took his friend's treason as the most venial of sins, and could see his big boats run up on dry land without other mental worry than additional presence of mind, turned red, purple, green and white while John was speaking, and remained white at the end. He had intended to say that Regina was not yet lost to Winthrop, but he did not say it. His eyes shone like stars out of his pale

face, and his heart beat loud. He knew very quickly what was the matter, even though he had never suffered such emotion before. Not for one instant during this whole year had he dreamed of love for Regina or marriage with her. She was not for blunt sailors like him. But he had admired her beauty, her good sense, her courage, her strong high spirit, he had thought in his heart that such would be the wife he would one day choose ; and this plain true fact of her love for him burst in upon his soul as light once burst in upon creation, and gave form and beauty to the world veiled in darkness. He was dizzy and sad for an instant, as he comprehended suddenly for the first time what this old friend of his was suffering. If this light went out of his life now he would find the pain bitter to bear. But with God's good help, and the man's pious heart turned gratefully to God always, it would never go out again !

The suspicions of sharp-witted Mrs. DeLaunay had been correct, Captain Sullivan had never thought of Regina ; and the sensitiveness and emotional weakness of Winthrop had waked the hearts of these two, and had driven the poor fellow into the very measures which for his own sake he should have avoided. The two men sat there in silence, one in the depths of pain the other on the heights of joy until Sol Tuttle opened the door with an uncertain hand, and staggered in with the bottle of whiskey in his pocket. He had the intention and a strong desire to say something, but his powers of speech were gone. So was the smooth old liquor which had once filled the bottle.

"And it was twenty years old," said John regretfully, as the messenger slid to the floor, and fell asleep.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE FAIR.

Mrs. DeLaunay was enjoying herself as President of the annual church fair, whose plump receipts made life on the mission tolerable for the parish priest. The office did not of itself confer much honor or responsibility, but her energy soon made it the very source of honor and centre of interest while the agony was on. Saranac braced itself for the fair as athletes do for a tug of war. It had many of the features peculiar to a mild epidemic; everybody suffered at the same time and in the same way; and all hoped to get compensation some day in heaven or in a shortened purgatory. The priest announced it each year in one form, for he had a good sense of humor; the receipts this year, dear brethren, are certain to be less than needed, and the trustees think the ladies should hold a fair; I suggested other means of raising this money to the ladies themselves, but they would not listen; their clamor for a fair has grown so loud that I can only surrender to the popular demand; therefore the ladies will meet after Mass in the vestry to take action.

Mrs. DeLaunay happened to be in the church that morning, and took the speech seriously. She went in with the few desperate women who knew there was no escape from the conscription and so they saved their pride by volunteering. Her request to be made

an associate was answered by making her president of the managing committee, and honorary head of the Fair. The other ladies congratulated her afterwards so warmly that one could infer their joy at escaping the honor.

“What am I to do?” she asked.

“A little of everything,” the priest said. “You must find women to take charge of the tables, to canvass with the books, and to enter contests for one thing or another. Then you must see to the hall, and its donations when the fair is ready to open.”

“Very simple indeed,” she commented and the priest smiled as one might who had taken his degree in fairs. She remembered that smile afterwards and used it herself when amateurs spoke of the simplicity of managing a fair. Canvassers were the first necessity, and she set out to find them; but had she the plague the younger women could not have fled from her more shamelessly. She became on the instant a monster whom no one dared meet. They were caught in the end when the priest came to her aid, but while they surrendered she was accused of their enslavement. The art of selecting the proper canvassers enraptured the astute lady. It was not simply a matter of catching your fish before frying it, one had to be particular about the fish. Church people had a rare instinct for the sport. The very perfection of a canvasser was a girl of twenty who dressed well and wore soft, silky, shimmering hair; whose eyes were magnetic and drooping, voice low and murmurous, gesture rare and all-conquering; who approached a victim like a dove and stripped him with the ferocity of a catamount; yet departing left behind a luminous

perfumed peace as of an angel visitant. It was surprising how many were found with these qualifications in one small town; no less than twenty persuasive maidens went forth willingly to coax the dimes from the Saranac people, all with shining hair and downcast eyes, all determined to collect the money required for the fair. They were not well up to the standard, of course, yet none were far below it. Mrs. De-Launay found them marvels of taste and grace and praised them to the whole world. They accepted her praise meekly, and spared her none the less. By the time they had wheedled fifty dollars out of her purse her admiration was exhausted.

As a student of human nature she felt that even this price was too high for a single lesson. Yet she let them loose on helpless Saranac without pity, and Saranac reared on its hind legs, pawed out with its front feet, raised its voice to heaven in hearty protest against the sirens. They were not to be shaken off. The first fair in Saranac had started a vendetta which was never to end until all concerned were exiled or dead. The twenty canvassers remembered every woman who in former years had flourished a fair book in the town and had taxed *their* brethren or *their* friends. These were the first victims. Their cries were recognized night and day as the money was torn from them, they could be seen flying through the streets closely but gently pursued by them of the shimmering hair and the downcast eyes, and their pallid expression betrayed for days afterward the suffering inflicted upon them.

Next the twenty turned upon the business men of the town, the grocers and dry goods men, the lawyers

and politicians, the officials and dignitaries. The persecution raged heaviest against these classes, but they bought a shortening of the agony by prompt and gloomy payment of the tax, which in turn was taken out of the church on the first opportunity. Mrs. DeLaunay did not wait to examine the other ravages of her twenty aids; she felt satisfied they would rend their relatives and one another in the end, that not a farthing would escape them. She had to choose the ladies who would take charge of the tables or booths at the fair. There were six tables and fifteen applications, and she appealed for guidance to the priest. He looked over the names, and marked off the impossible people.

"From the others make a choice," he said. "They are all good but their motives have much to do with their usefulness." Mrs. DeLaunay liked to sift motives. The sifting process in this instance gave her six: Mrs. Cooney had a table last year and was so much outshone by Mrs. Mooney that the disgrace could be wiped out only by Mrs. Cooney overthrowing Mrs. Mooney this year; Miss Marechal had six different dresses with which to pose for twelve nights before an artistic booth ribboned to match each dress; Mrs. Cloran was a widow, a grass widow the doubters said, and she wanted social recognition; Miss O'Meara's father kept a saloon and she needed all such things as fair-booths, membership in societies, and the like to keep respectable; Mrs. Sweeney washed for a living and wanted to let people see a washerwoman was as good as the best; and Mary Lorty, old and ugly, desired to do a little for pure love of the church and this special parish. As she was quite

incapable for a post of honor they gave her the office of wiping dishes in the kitchen. When the appointments were made Mrs. DeLaunay had eight mortal enemies and sharp-eyed critics to contend with, and their arrows pursued her until the fair became a mere memory

The contests for a doll and a gold watch were started without difficulty, with suspicious ease the priest thought. Two little girls were to contest the doll and two men the watch. Mr. Tim Grady offered himself as a contestant and proposed the name of Morsieur Narcisse McCarthy as his opponent. He did not mention his reasons for voluntarily entering a contest which most men avoided when they could. He simply boasted of his ability to win that watch against Monsieur McCarthy or any of his breed, and he wanted the chance to prove the boast. This challenge interested the town for a few days, and forced McCarthy to take it up as proudly and arrogantly as it had been thrown down. Mr. Grady thus entered the public view once more as a popular favorite, a place he had not held since the lawn-party; it was his natural place before his humiliation; he had almost taken oath to hold it now by making a contest which would be a Saranac tradition; and he soured the proud and frugal soul of Monsieur McCarthy by his loud declaration to sink five hundred dollars in the watch. The town applauded. Mrs. DeLaunay flattered him. The contest for the watch absorbed all interest. Nevertheless the doll contest was properly arranged with the children of two leading politicians as contestants. The priest thought it quite a stroke of diplomacy to bring politics into the contest and

complimented the President. They did not know the politicians. These gentlemen met after the contest had begun and the richer said to the poorer:

"There is no use in spending money on the thing. I want to make a deal with you. Let me have the doll, and I'll stand the bill. We'll put it at one hundred dollars. The winner goes down for fifty one the loser for forty nine, and the thing's settled right here. What d'ye say?"

The poorer said many things expressive of his willingness to get out of a scrape for nothing, even with the prestige of defeat for his child. The preparations for the fair was now in full swing, and Saranac was in a state of fever. Mrs. DeLaunay could not remember its like. The novelty of it never wore away from her. Fifty chosen souls selected by herself were now every day goading the people to madness; demanding gifts for the tables, dainties for the restaurant and hard money for the treasury; with effects of profanity, bad temper, slander, and abuse that kept the atmosphere of the village in a constant glow. The tongues of the gossips went day and night like hard pressed thrashers in harvest time; the friends of the fair had to enjoy spotless reputations to escape censure.

"But it's life," said Mrs. DeLaunay to her family "It's the nearest approach to the wickedness and dash of a big city that Saranac has ever shown me. You must get into it, Regina. It will do you good."

"I am in it, mamma," said Regina very composedly. "Captain Sullivan and I are to revive the theatricals."

"The very thing," cried mamma, "and you shall put your father and me in at least one cast. How-

ever—why did I not think of it before? You shall have the decorations. The Captain is the very man for the decorations. I saw him use a hammer like a born carpenter.”

“What’s the matter with John Winthrop,” said her husband peevishly, “isn’t he good on decorations?”

“He’s in the West on business I heard,” said Regina as calmly as before, “and will not be back for months. Mines, I think, or something of that kind.”

“Mines in midwinter,” said he laughing, “that’s a story.”

But there was no further comment on the incident, and Regina had told all she knew about it just as Hugh had told it to her. He might have told her more, but she had suddenly lost interest in Winthrop under the ardent glances of the confident Captain, who had spoken the last word to John as he left Saranac and had comforted the father ever since in his loneliness. Old David had failed visibly after his son’s going.

“I shan’t ever see him again,” he said to Hugh often, “but that’s better’n to see the last of him the way I feared. Now he’ll keep his promise, he was always true to his word, he won’t die until he hears I’m dead. By that time who knows what’ll happen. I’m prayin’ for two things: if he’s got to die soon that a fever or an accident may take him off without his fault, or that he’ll get another grip on life, and live right on for the love of it. I don’t want my boy to go into the next world, even if he doesn’t believe in it, after committing suicide. What do you folks teach about going that way?”

“Why,” said Hugh embarrassed, “you’ll have to see

Tim Grady about that. I'm poor in catechism, and I never heard much about it. But it's like dying with all your sins on you, and no repentance."

"*You'll* never go that way," said David with a feeling of envy for Mr. Sullivan. "None of you Catholics do with all your nonsense. No, not even that God-forsaken Amedée, thrown like a dog into Texas, where by right he ought to have been shot or hanged; *he* comes home to die with his mother and the priest, to be buried among the best with all his sins forgiven; and *my* boy, that was brought up respectably—well, there's no use talking about it. One man goes this way, another that. It's laid out for us, I suppose."

"Not for Catholics," said Hugh.

"No confound 'em, not for Catholics," repeated David. "Ah, if I could have foreseen these days, John would have been brought up a Catholic. You get a pile of comfort out of your religion. Anyone can see that. Don't you?"

"I can't say I ever got much for I never needed any so far. But I've seen them that have, and I know when it's needed it's there for me. With us everything is certain, you know."

"That's it," said David with animation. "Certain is the word. There's no miserable doubt like what I suffer from. You know where you're going and why and what's going to happen. I've read some about it. And you believe your prayers will be answered. Your sins are all forgiven before you go, with your sacraments and things. I must talk to Tim Grady about it. There's nothing like certainty when the grave is near."

There was a long silence then, for Hugh Sullivan

could not talk theology of any sort with comfort, and Winthrop was plainly anxious to give vent to feelings which troubled him vaguely and which needed a sympathetic ear.

"Tim Grady can tell you everything," was the way Hugh got out of an awkward position. There was little time for theology just then. The fair had opened with a rattle and bang, and its officials could think of nothing else. For twelve nights they would have to endure the misery of late hours and excitement. Aching hearts like old David's would have to see to their own aches in the meantime. The town hall was the seat of the fair, and under the skilful hands of the decorators it had become presentable. Country villages have little to decorate with, but Regina and the Captain had collected unlimited bunting and cedar from the winter woods, and had produced patriotic, artistic, and natural effects, sufficient to make the natives stare. These heavy souls went open mouthed through the green arches into the restaurant, the shooting-gallery, the side-shows, the booths, and looked out into the main room as if from a wood-bower into a clearing. It cost only ten cents to see all this beauty and to be badgered by the canvassers, but it cost a round sum to see "the hull show" after one got inside.

In the shooting-gallery where a rosy-cheeked Robin Hood presided over the air-guns, three shots at an American Indian cost five cents; three shrieks from the said Indian entitled the lucky marksmen to a cigar whose smoke smelled of the plague. The art gallery was in charge of a siren whose eloquence shamed the manager of a dime museum; she needed

all her language to do a profitable business, since one inspection of her junk collection was too much for the simplest. Saranac was highly amazed at the new features Mrs. DeLaunay had put into the fair. The young ladies in the various departments were dressed like prim Puritans, and the ladies in the booths in colonial style. There was a Turk at the door of the menagerie, a Delmonico waiter in the restaurant, and an Uncle Tom at the the ticket office of the minstrel show; Mother Goose went round with the grab-bag and a gipsy told wonderful fortunes. The restaurant was a bower of peace and beauty, and its Delmonico waiter moved grandly about to the tinkling of a music box, faithfully copying his model even to the securing of tips. When one had completed the circle of entertainment provided for him, no matter how slim his intentions, he was out a round dollar. It took Saranac three nights to discover the fact.

Mrs. Sullivan attended the fair on the night chosen for the production of the play in which the entire De-Launay family took part.

"Did you like it?" asked her daughter on her return.

"Maybe I did an' maybe I didn't," she answered. "There wor some things no dacint person 'ud like, an' thin agin there wor things mighty plasins' an' funny. Fairs are pritty much like the world, betwixt an' between, some good an' some bad in 'em, an' that's why people likes 'em so much, I belave. Mickey Moran took the tickets at the door, an' yed die to hear the bladgin' of him. He hasn't had an office, good or bad, since he was supervisor, and the way he cut up wid the poor people was awful. He was fightin'

wid every wan ov 'em. Whin I put in me quarther for a ticket,

'Is this a good quarther,' sez he.

'Faith,' sez I, 'it's so long since ye had wan o' yer own, I don't believe ye cud tell,' sez I.

An' widout another word he drops his impidence, an' hands me a ticket. Oh, he knows me."

"He ought to after that," said her daughter in an offended tone.

"Well, haven't I a right to defend meself," said the old lady, answering the tone, "an' wud I let wan o' the Morans put an insult upon me afore the whole world. *You* might, bekase ye're half Frinch, but I'm Irish. Whin I got into the hall sure the sates were all down an' every wan o' thim taken. They wor goin' to have a play. How well ye didn't tell me that afore I got ready to go."

"I knew you wouldn't go if I did."

"To be sure not. Such a play—but wait till I come to it. While I was standin' there like a fool wid a crowd o' boys that had no sates along comes Father McManus."

"Ye have no sate," says he.

"I'm no worse off than many's an other," says I.

"Well come along now an' I'll get ye a good place," says he, and up the aisle he marched me afore them all, an' planted me like a queen in the first row. I was that proud of it I couldn't see a thing for tin minutes. Whin I got back me sinses the play was goin' on. 'Twas a wild kind ov a thing called the Octhroon, an' who was in it, d'ye mind but me brave Hugh an' the whole DeLaunay family. Pon me sowl, 'twas a sight to see Mrs. DeLaunay an' her husband

bowin' an' talkin' an' runnin' an an' aff as if they wor in their own house at home. An' Regina looked as sweet as an angel. But that bucko Hugh spiled it all makin' love to her. Divil a such love-makin' ever I heerd tell of. He went on his knees to her an' he kissed her hand, an' he fanned her whin she fainted, an' he talked sweet till the boys in the gallery began to shout an' the priest had to quiet 'em. An' the worst of it all, Julia, was that he looked as if he meant it. D'ye think, now that John Winthrop's gone, Hugh 'd have any idea o' makin' up to her."

"What did the people say about it?" was the evasive reply.

"They said 'twas the most nathural actin' they ever saw, an' ould Mother Two-and-Six put in her tongue to say there wor more nathure than actin' in it. An' faith, she's not far wrong, I'm thinkin'; though her tongue carries farther than her piety. I'll talk to him to-morrow about it. Well, thin, the play wound up wid a big nagur of an Indian shootin' a man an' the chairs wor taken out an' I med the rounds ov every-thing. Dr. Crowley took me through 'em all, an' paid me way. I saw the minsthrels, an' the menagerie, an' the art gallerey; I took a grab out o' the grab bag, haulin' out the biggest thing I could lay me hands on, an' it took us an hour unwindin' the paper to get at a match; I had me fortune towld that marriage was in me house ag'in; I ate three kinds o' crame in the atin'-room, an' knew me own out o' the three. An' they had a little music-box playin' there that soft ye'd think ye wor atin' it wid the crame."

"I suppose everybody was there," said Mrs. La-jeunesse.

"Ay, an' everybody's relations. I had a bow from Mrs. DeLaunay afore I left—musha, but she's the fine figure of a woman, head and shouldhers over 'em all. An' Regina shook hands with me kind o' shy an' sad poor thing. An' every girl that had a book kem up for me to sign, an' I signed every wan, for ye couldn't get out ov it they wor that bowld. An' Misther McCarthy spint tin cints on me for sody wather, and it most bruk his heart to part with so much at wanst; but I med up for it by givin' a dollar to his contist. But Tim Grady bate 'em all for grandher an' cheek. There he was dhressed to kill, as thick as molasses wid the poorest, an' Mrs. De. Launay, an' everyone; an' tillin the crowd he had five hundhred dollars to dhrop in the contist; an' ye cud see Frinchy McCarthy turn green about the lips whin any wan repated the same to him. It was a great night anyhow for me, an' I hope the priest 'll make a handful o' money out of it."

"Do you think Mr. Grady will win the watch?"

"Not a doubt of id. That ould man never yet was baten by livin' sowl except Mrs DeLaunay."

Mr. Tim Grady had no doubt of his success at the Fair polls, though he grumbled at the loss of time old David Winthrop caused him. Hugh Sullivan offered to canvass for him while Winthrop claimed his services.

"Have you any idea what's troubling the old man?" Hugh asked.

Mr. Grady shook his head in the old prophetic fashion.

"I know but I won't tell until the right moment," he replied, "then you'll be more surprised than I was

whin I first suspected it. He's interested in theology a bit, and he's interested in death a bit, an' I'm givin' him pints on both."

"Points!" said Hugh. "He'll be like an apple stuck with cloves when you get done shoving points into him."

Nevertheless strange things were occurring in the quiet house where David Winthrop mourned for his son and sat waiting for death, and Tim Grady was in part responsible for them. After a few controversial buffets Tim had said plainly to him,

"Ye're wan o' the luckiest men that ever drew breath. Ye've never been baptized accordin' to yer own sayin', an' now ye're on the verge o' the grave, an' ye have only to be baptized to shtep off the earth clear o' purgatory sthraight into heaven. I don't care what sort iv a life a man's had whin he kin do that he's done as much for himself as a saint cud. Whin ye're ready for the priest say the word an' I'll see to it. There's no use argifyin'. Ye're mind's med up some time, an' ye only have to speak."

The idea of giving some completeness to his life had taken firm hold of Winthrop. This world was ended for him. A bruised heart and a wretched body were all he had left of fortune. Into the next world, whose existence he accepted, he was carrying a soul as wretched as the body he left behind; a soul burdened with the memory of his lost son, and destined to as lame a course as his earthly life had been. He could not bear that thought, and turned desperately to religion. The sublime and definite promises of the Church appealed to him with irresistible strength. To be as free from sin and penalty as the babe, sancti-

fied by the Body of Christ, and strengthened with the holy oils, to enter upon eternal life in an instant, perfect, sure of that success denied him upon earth, heart whole, never to know weariness again,—it was a dream to inspire the dead. He believed long before books and Tim Grady fixed it in his soul. He hardly knew why he hesitated to seize the prize at his hand, the prize which made his life a triumph where men saw failure. Yet he hesitated. Until one midnight the reason of his hesitation was given to him in the hour between half thought and sleep. His mistakes, his blunders, his losses all through life had come from hesitation, and now he was to blunder again, to lose eternity in delaying without reason. He started up in alarm wide-awake to his danger, and called his one servant to run to the town hall with a note for Tim Grady. Even now a weakness seized him, and he could not dress as he intended, but lay back on his pillow wondering with the grim courage of a man out of luck if death would take him in the night alone and pass out with his soul as the priest entered the door!

The priest and Hugh Sullivan came in with Grady and set to work with speed. His passing fit of weakness left him, and he gave a clear account of his wishes, and a brief statement of his faith. The three sacraments were administered to him between midnight and morning, and he slept,—with Grady at his bedside and Hugh slumbering in the next room,—forever beyond the reach of evil fortune. Grady watched his face with interest. At first after the priest had gone its expression was one of placid satisfaction and comfort, but in the gray light it seemed to

take on the hue of death. His body lay still and fixed, so that Tim grew alarmed and called him gently, then touched and shook him, only to see the body fall limply back into its place. It looked like death, but as Mr. Grady could see no reason for this sudden departure he made no outcry and stood waiting and thinking, and presently with a loud sigh old David came suddenly out of his heavy sleep, sat up in the bed, stared about him excitedly, as if he had difficulty in locating himself, and then lay back on the pillow with the tears streaming down his face.

"John is dead," he cried out so loudly that Hugh came hurrying in from the next room, and began to soothe and comfort him. Mr. Grady seeing that something unusual had happened—"may be a temptation direct from the devil"—secretly fingered his beads in the outer room. When the old man had quieted down he looked at Hugh sadly and said again :

"John is dead, but not by his own hand, thank God!" His information was accepted as a matter of fact and nothing more was said about it.

"It's lucky he got the sacraments afore he wint out of his mind," Mr. Grady said. Winthrop rallied however and did not appear delirious or insane thereafter. His friends left him to his housekeeper, and went back to the work of the fair now drawing to a close amid much excitement. The two days reserved for the children had passed without disaster. They were the only days when the noisy little ones were permitted to attend unguarded by parents or friends. They tired out the officials. Every child had a quarter to spend, and

felt itself master of its fate. Nothing suited them. They found the prices too high, the candy not sweet enough, the ice cream too cold, the ladies too "sassy." They refused to sign a book or to invest their money without an instant return of one hundred per cent. They were there for three dollars' worth of fun for twenty-five cents, and some hoped to save five cents on the bargain. They inspected the goods over and over, and protested against inferior articles on the wheel of fortune. The ridicule they cast on everything below their standard made the ladies indignant. They found the stray holes in the decorations and widened them, found the loose tacks in the cedar trimmings and pulled them out; the hungrier and rougher children dived under the walls of the restaurant secretly and carried off cake remnants; some of them scraped the ice cream cans and fought for the privilege; when they had spent their money, littered the hall with paper and peanut-shells, and worked the ladies into a fever, they stood around and voted the fair a failure and a "fake." The boys guyed Robin Hood and his cigars in the shooting gallery, and the girls made remarks on the decorations. Had not Captain Sullivan, Mrs. DeLaunay the priest, and a few other public spirited and thoughtful citizens given them a final course of cream, candy, grab-bag, menagerie, minstrel, shooting, and soda water they would have started a riot, and advertised the fair next day as a great fraud.

Mrs. DeLaunay, who ever loved the crowd, was inspired by the disorder they created; Regina objected to it and hid herself in the restaurant with her two pets, Remi and Elise, well-bred darlings, with

appetites that knew no limit. They appreciated her attentions and told her all the childish news of the town with comments on that gossip peculiar to grown people. It interested Regina sufficiently to rouse pleasant blushes.

"You like Uncle Hugh, don't you, Miss DeLau-nay?" said Elise archly, and Remi shouted,

"Now that isn't fair, because I never said she didn't. Ask her the right way. I said she didn't like him to marry him. We all like him the other way, don't we?"

"Certainly," said Regina. "But why do you talk about it at all, I'd like to know?"

"Miss Ransom she said too ur teacher she thought it was a match—"

"What do those teachers know anyway?" said Remi.

"She said how in the play everyone saw it was going to be a match, and I asked mamma. and she said if it would be, then you'd be our aunt."

"That is what I'd like," said Remi, "but Miss De-Launay has all the say in it. Teachers' talk can't make things true."

"But is it true by itself?" persisted Elise.

"When you call me aunt then you'll know it to be true," said Regina gently, and they understood that the happiness in store for them was not for conversation until a long time had passed. The crowd of children, having now laid waste the fair, and reduced the government to a most miserable condition were preparing to depart in triumph, gorged with feasting and laden with plunder. The fair was a mere wreck, its supplies gone, its draperies wilted and torn, its de-

partments used up. The minstrels, the menagerie and the art gallery had collapsed, the fortune-teller and the grab-bag girl, the Rebecca of the well and Robin Hood had fled home to recuperate for the evening performance. Only the children were alive to the joys of life at a fair, and complained of the clock which had brought around tea time so soon. They had one supreme satisfaction in going, that peanuts and cream having given out there was no use to stay longer. Hugh marched them to the gate under the eye of the priest, and blessed his luck when the door was locked on the last one.

The grown people were hardly less troublesome in the end than the children. Having set their heart on certain prizes they felt bound to win them. They dreamed of them and consulted dream oracles on the matter ; they set mystic traps to prevent them going to others ; they speculated on the mystical value of certain numbers, and put their names to them ; and they spent a certain amount of money besides to make sure of them. Each night of the last three was devoted to naming the winners of these gifts, when the town hall became a little Monte Carlo for the crowd, eager to see some return for their investments. They stood massed around the platform where the wheel turned out the lucky numbers, of all creeds and conditions, as nervous in a quiet way as the frequenters of Monte Carlo. Not a few had their theories and plans for winning the best and many gifts. The announcement of winners was received with various expressions of dissent or approval, with groans from the disappointed, and cheers for the poor widow who won a ton of coal or a sack of flour ; with secret

curses on the luck, or on the dream oracles, or on the useless method ; with bitter determination to spend no more money on fair books in the hope of winning a prize. Mr. Grady, who was a Puritan of the most advanced type, denounced the proceedings like a prophet born too soon amid a good-natured people. They laughed at him but accepted most of his arguments. The priest did not mind, and seemed rather to like Grady's hot opinions on all things that are and ought to be.

Both Grady and Sullivan were steady attendants at old Winthrop's bedside. The story of his baptism was now common and disturbed no prejudices, as in his life he had never professed belief in any sect and had railed at most of them. The more intense believers of the town were willing an old broken down skeptic should take to idols on his deathbed, while the generous ones rejoiced at his acceptance of faith at the last moment. Until his weakness had increased to such a degree that speaking became sometimes an effort he did not allude to the delirium of his baptism morning, but he asked Hugh regularly if he had received word of John. Then at the end he spoke

"It's six days now since he died, and surely there will be news. Of course it took some time to find the body, and strangers might not know right away where to send word."

Seeing Hugh look at him curiously he added :

"Didn't I tell you John was dead?"

"You did."

"Of course you didn't believe it. Ah, God is good, to us fools in particular that denied Him all our lives. John is dead, drowned by accident, for he would never

break his word to me — and what's more I believe God was merciful to him at the last as to me. I'll tell it to you, Sullivan, for you were the one friend that stuck to him. You know how the dread of his death hung over me these months back. If ever a man prayed to avert it, I did. You never thought of praying for him, I'll bet."

"No, I didn't," said Hugh frankly.

"It takes a father to remember it. I didn't know how to pray of course, but I did my best. I made the offer of my own miserable life for his. I asked only that he might die of a fever, or in any way but by suicide. When I began to think of a life after this, and began to believe in the Church I added a prayer for his soul that at least it might not be lost. I made the sacrifice here — if such a thing was sensible and right — of his companionship in the next world, could he only be saved. Was that correct?"

"I'm sure I don't know," said Hugh dubiously.

"You don't know enough about religion, Hugh," said old David sharply. "You've never given me a direct answer to a question yet."

"Outside of the mere catechism I'm lost," said Hugh humbly, but with humor he added, "You can't expect a Lake Champlain pilot to know all about the Hudson can you?"

"No, of course not. Well, I made the sacrifice anyway. What a church for sacrifices ours is. I was willing to stay in purgatory a thousand years to save that boy. The night I was baptized something happened. After I received the sacraments I fell into a sleep. It was like a sleep, but I was wide awake as I am now. I could swear to that. I just

passed from this room to a place out West somewhere, the worst looking country I ever saw, all sand or mud or rock. A big river ran through it like mad, boiling and foaming, and not a house in sight. I said to myself,

“ ‘Winthrop, what in—excuse me, Hugh—I said what are you doing here?’ ”

“And then I saw hanging to a log in the middle of that terrible river my boy, John Winthrop, hanging to it for dear life, the life he never cared much for. He was played out, and I saw he couldn’t hold on very long. I couldn’t help him, but I got on the log somehow and cried out :

“ ‘John, I’m here.’ ”

“He opened his eyes, saw me and smiled, and he said :

“Dad, it’s all up with us. It was an accident. I had nothing to do with it. Won’t you believe that?”

“I believe it,” said I. “I thank God it’s not suicide. I’m going too, and I’ve been baptized a Catholic like Hugh Sullivan. John, since we’re going together let me baptize you. Let us both go before God like decent men, not like tramps. Baptism will make the way clear for you. I’ll join you soon. What do you say?”

“I’m willing, dad,” he said opening his eyes again. “I’ve been thinking things all night, and if it’s not too late——”

“Do you believe?” I shouted.

“I believe whatever Hugh believed,” he said.

“Are you sorry for all your sins.”

“I’m sorry, dad.”

Then I took my hands full of water and dashed it

on his face and baptized him, and the next minute he let go of the log and never came up again, and I was back in the room here, crying like a woman as I had a right to. I couldn't speak of it right away, for my heart was broken to think my clever boy should come to such an end. But I know now it was all for the best. I am as certain of his baptism as of my own. What do you think of it, Hugh Sullivan?"

"Did you tell the priest of it," said Hugh.

"No. But I will if you say so."

"I believe with you," said Sullivan warmly, "that John died happily. It's a wonderful story."

"What did we ever do," cried the old man, "to have such favors showered upon us?"

"That's God's way," the Captain answered. "I suppose you did the best you could, your hearts were right, and so He saved you in His own way. You must tell the story to Grady. It will please him more than anything."

But Winthrop was never more able to speak even his wants to those about him. Once he asked feebly,

"Is everything settled about that DeLaunay girl?" and when John gravely answered that their marriage date was fixed a spasm of anguish pinched his face; but it gave way at once to a smile of profound peace. His boy was happier at that moment than any bridegroom. He never failed to ask for news of John's death, but none came, and Hugh felt ashamed for a moment of the credence he had given to the old man's vision. Yet when on the last night of the fair a telegram was handed to him with the brief statement of John Winthrop's death by accidental drowning on that very midnight old David had received the sacraments, the

Captain was deeply moved. He telegraphed instructions for the forwarding of the body, and deserted the fair to bring the news to the dying father. The old man was no more than able to hear the telegram read and to learn that his son's body would repose by his side in Saranac graveyard. Tim Grady left his contest to take care of itself when a note warned him of Winthrop's agony. With the two faithful friends at his side the old man passed away near midnight just as the crunching of the snow and the laughing voices in the street announced the closing of the fair. Tim went out to get the news of the contest and the receipts.

"Won with a hundred dollars to spare," was the story of Tim's victory.

"Receipts almost two thousand," was the result of Mrs. DeLaunay's management.

"It was a great fair an' no mishtake," said Tim, as he went back to the room of death.

CHAPTER XXVII.

AMÉDÉE'S DAUGHTER.

Once in a while striking incidents will cluster thick in the history of a soul, or a group, or a town, and make life exciting for months or years; then suddenly ending in a climax of mingled tears and joy, the old happy routine resumes its place, and life seems to pause; as if a brave troop on the march through a rugged wilderness came suddenly on a balmy clearing by a river; and then off with arms and knapsacks, and out with banjo and harmonica around the steaming mess-kettle, as if war had never been and peace must

be forever. Saranac found itself in the clearing that summer, when the dead were buried and the lovers had married, and all the excitement stirred up by the pilot's son had died away. Sweet peace wandered through the ripening fields, and her fragrant breath scented the sunshine. The quiet of Saranac was like the quiet of the siesta hours in Italy, glowing and warm, full of breathings, human beings absent from the ways and porches; they were all in the fields reaping, or afloat in the Champlain steamers and canal-boats making money for the long and cruel winter.

It was Sunday afternoon and Vespers was over in the church. The people had returned home save the few that lingered to pray in the churchyard. Mrs. Sullivan knelt at the foot of the Sullivan plot and tried to remember the souls whose bodies lay in it, but with Tim Grady entangling himself and Captain LaRoche in a tape measure, under her eyes, and talking as only Tim could talk anywhere, she was forced to defer her prayers.

"Musha, thin, Tim," said she, "but yer tongue is longer than yer measure. There's no end to it. An it's wondherin' I am if there's anny single place in the whole world where ye're not heard."

"There is ma'am," said Mr. Grady promptly, and he pointed to the nearest grave. Mrs. Sullivan laughed.

"There's wan blessin' thin," she said, "for thim that die in Saranac. What's throublin' ye I dunno?"

"I tould LaRoche here, an' I tould the priest whin they dug Amedée's grave that it was six inches over the line. They wouldn't belave me thin, an' now I've just proved it to 'im."

"Ye're a great ould man for provin' to be sure. An' a nice business it is to be measurin' graves whin waitin' for a christenin'. But ye have no more respect for the baby jist born than ye had for her father. Sure there's lots o' time for the grave widout havin' it wid yer meals."

"I'll not dispute wid ye, ma'am," said Tim loftily. "I'll have words wid none on the day Amedée's daughter is to be chrishened. I shtud for her father, an' I'm goin' to be prisint at her baptism wid peace an' good will to all min, an' all ould wimmin'. I'm happy. So is LaRoche. He's downed ould McCarthy, another ould woman. The child gets one half the property of her father."

The pilot chuckled, for the loss of that property to the McCarthys had angered him. In her curiosity to know more about the will Mrs. Sullivan forgot the vexatious remarks of Mr. Grady.

"So the baby gets one-half," she said, "an' that manes all, for the mother 'll lave her everything, o' coorse; an' was that the way Amedée left it in his will?"

"All to the wife if no child was born. Half to the child if it came, an' Captain Sullivan, yer own son, to be executor wid the mother. An' ould McCarthy's heart's broke, an' this man can't keep from laughin'. There's no raison in aither of 'em, for in any case there was no money in it for the two ould fools. But that's the way o' the world to fight like murder over what doesn't belong to 'em, an' thin see a bit of a baby walk in an' take away the property. Isn't that the Captain comin' now I wondher."

Two children breathless rushed up to tell grandma

that the procession was coming, and dashed back again to secure the best places in the vestry.

"That b'y, Remi, is growin'," said Mr. Grady.

"What else has he to do?" said Mrs. Sullivan.

"Thim that has less don't do it, ma'am," said Tim.

"'Twould do ye good," Mrs. Sullivan said, "to hear Mrs. McCarthy and Madame LaRoche at it last Sunday about the baptism. Nothin' ud do Madame but the child ud be taken to the church on the spot, an' it only a day ould wid the breath hardly fixed in it. That was Frinch style, o' coo-se, an' ould McCarthy backed her up in it, for the poor man was brought up that way, an' can't help it. But Mrs. McCarthy shtud her ground in the face o' thim all, an' named to day for the christenin', an' it's to be named Regina after the godmother, an' a mighty purty, sollum kind of a name it is."

"There's only wan lady in the town ever made to wear such a name," said Mr. Grady. "It manes a queen, an' it's little I thought she'd be so foolish as to put such an ordinary commonplace name as Sullivan behind it."

"That's me own thought," said the old lady. "But whin I did it mese f that was born in a sinsible country, what can you expect from a Saranac girl."

Two carriages now drove up in state to the vestry-door. Out of the first stepped Monsieur McCarthy, and the two grandmothers, Mrs. McCarthy carrying the little candidate for baptism with all the dignity and haughtiness suited to a lady of her rank, and rather ignoring Madame whose eyes never left the child.

Out of the other stepped Regina and her husband,

looking as happy and ordinary as a newly married pair can look in the presence of their friends. No shadows from John Winthrop's grave lay on Regina's pathway. Captain Sullivan had taken pains to prevent that disaster. She never learned that the young man had resolved to die rather than live without her; so that her only regret about him was that he had died an untimely death. The Captain was in his uniform, which Regina knew always softened the abruptness of his manner and changed the inflections of his speech for the better. She insisted on his wearing it whenever etiquette permitted, declaring that her most elegant toilets still looked subdued in its brightness. She was educating him unawares out of his fondness for kitchen epithets and his bluntness. He had never been taught the dependence of everything in this world upon a hundred other things, and so spoke of hemp rope in the hearing of those whose ancestors had been hanged. He accepted her guidance and training with the docility of a sailor ashore, and the good-natured taunt that she could never teach him how to run a ship. Three months of married life had not lessened her esteem for him. Even Mr. Grady could read the respect for Hugh that betrayed itself in her manner. He would always be her superior in simplicity and candor, in fidelity and faith. He knew nothing of casuistry. In the supreme moments of life he would be as unconsciously a hero as on that night when the steamer went ashore on the west rocks of Lake Champlain; and Regina said to herself regularly that she would always love him as she did then.

They all stood before the priest in the vestry, the

little crowd gazing with delight at the beautiful god mother whose presence shed a glory there. Madame held the baby, and the other relatives and friends stood in the background. Little Regina accepted touch and blessing, salt, spittle, sacred oil and baptismal water with perfect indifference; squeezed the fingers of her sponsors, tugged at the wiping cloths and went into raptures over the burning candle. Madame looked anxiously at the matrons, who shook their heads gravely. Then the last prayer was said, the candle extinguished, and the children, who had crowded about to see the ceremony, banished. Still the baby remained indifferent and smiling, and Madame grew more grave; but at the very last, as if her guardian angel had pinched her slyly, little Regina puckered her face and burst into a storm of tears and screamings pleasant to hear. Then the matrons smiled and laughed and Mrs. Sullivan in her stateliest language congratulated the baby's relatives. The baby that cried at its own baptism was safe from sickness and death for at least a year, while the baby that did not would never see its first birthday. The priest wrote down the proper things in the register, and said with a sigh,

“Poor Amedée!”

Then he called over the sponsors to show them a circumstance. Baptisms, marriages, and deaths were rare in Saranac. On one page of the register were seven entries in this order: the burial of Amedée, the baptism of David Winthrop, the burial of the two Winthrops, the baptism of Regina, her marriage with Captain Sullivan, and the baptism of Amedée's daughter.

They found it wonderful. It was an official telling of the whole story told at length in this book, and so it would go down to Saranac posterity. But who would be able to tell a century hence how curiously and tragically these different entries blended, and what a romance lay behind them! Amid the chattering and congratulations and the shrieks of little Regina the party broke up. The carriages rolled away to the ringing of a joy bell in the church tower, as was proper at a baptism. The children satisfied with one novelty rushed off to find others. The old women hastened home for Sunday tea, and the old men remained a little longer to chat with the priest. They in turn drifted off, followed by the pious souls who haunted the church until the sexton's patience was exhausted. Then the Angelus rang out for a few minutes, the church doors were locked, and the impatient sexton slipped away down the road fearful lest the priest should clip another minute from his night off.

The priest was left alone saying his office as he walked up and down the pathway beside the church. The low sun was casting long shadows over the plain, and the gray night began to rise in the East. Now he could see the figures of his people fading down the road that led to the village; so would they all vanish one by one from the ways of the town and all the ways of earth. When he turned the graveyard lay before him, and as he prayed he remembered many a poor creature lying there once as full of life as these who had just left him. And so he walked and prayed, now facing the living, now facing the dead, mindful of both, feeling more keenly than usual the little distance between them, and sad that death must be

the end of everything. Then the sun disappeared, and the darkness came on, and the priest went away to his tea and his books. Saranac, its living and dead, were left in silence and night !

[THE END.]

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